THE PASSING OF OUL-I-BUT AND OTHER TALES

BY

ALAN SULLIVAN

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For a moment there was
a silence as of death

THE PASSING *of* OUL-I-BUT

AND OTHER TALES

by ALAN SULLIVAN

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TO

MY WIFE

The Author desires to thank the Editors of *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Scribner's Magazine*, and Messrs Street & Smith, for their courtesy in permitting the use of several of the following stories.

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THE PASSING OF OUL-I-BUT

From Baffin Land to Barrow Strait
The level ice-fields go,
From Boothia Gulf to Minto Head
The great bergs journey slow ;
By ridge and shore, by cape and bay,
By reefs the whalers shun,
The bear and coast wolf seek their prey
Where the blind sea ways run.

League upon league of frozen death
The trackless barrens lie,
Speechless beneath the north wind's breath
And the shimmering flame on high ;
Where, rank on rank, the cold green fires
Blazon the purple night,
And the grounded icebergs lifted spires
Are steeped in ghostly light.

The small brown people dwell within
Their carven igloo homes,
Till the lost sun returns to melt
The dark and rounded domes ;
And again the bearded walrus dips
Beneath the drifting floe,
And the sleek gray seal affrighted slips
From his bed upon the snow.

THE PASSING OF OUL-I-BUT

Chan-tie, the Curlew, sat on a rock near the end of Great Bear Point and gazed blankly north at the Arctic Ocean. Spring had not yet weakened the chill manacles of that rock-bound coast, and the heavy ice stretched from her very feet, but Chan-tie's expression reflected nothing of the light of the strengthening sun.

She turned her broad fat face to her mother: "Aule-lik-tahai, let us start," she said slowly.

But Kug-yi-yuk, the Swan, was old, also she was comfortable, also she was busy making the master of all Husky fish-hooks. One set of lean brown sinewy fingers held a glistening fish bone, three inches long, and the other set ceaselessly twisted a needle-pointed flint into one end of it. She bent over it, twisting and screwing, till the flint point poked through, then she looked at Chan-tie with a grunt of satisfaction. "It is good, but I am a fool!"

Chan-tie's face expressed nothing: "Why?" she said, lazily.

The old woman's eyes peered out across the level ice. Half a mile from shore a lumpy line of hummocks broke its crystalline surface, and, behind these, out of sight of the caribou that walked out to sun themselves, lifted a clump of dome-like mounds. From the height on which they sat, a brownish yellow figure could be seen; it crept slowly from one dome to another, then stooped and disappeared. Kug-yi-yuk pointed:

"That is why," she said, with a tinge of regret at her own words, "Oul-i-but lost two yesterday, and, see, I make him another."

She leaned back, and behind the film over her glazed eyes there moved something memorial and tender. It did not seem so long ago, that time when Oul-i-but had stalked into the women's quarters, and put his hand on her shoulder and said "Come." She had come, willingly and with not a little pride, for Oul-i-but was the strongest man and the best hunter of the tribe, and she had never regretted it. Now—even

as the fish-hooks had dropped from his palsied fingers into the green abyss below—her mind sank into the depths of an unwonted reflection.

The sun drooped slowly, but her busy hands stayed not, whatever her thoughts. She rounded the jagged hole and pushed another bone nearly through it, pointing upward till the two made a V with the one leg shorter than the other, then she lashed the angle firmly with sinew, and punched another hole for the line. "It is finished," she said sharply, "Pi-huk-tuk, let us go home."

They clambered carefully down the smooth rocks, and, once on the level ice, Chan-tie looked curiously at her mother, "What is it," she ventured, "Will he go?"

Kug-yi-yuk's leathern face sharpened into a grim despair, "Yes—my daughter, he will go."

There was no one about in the camp when they reached it. A few lean, sharp-nosed, bushy-tailed dogs smelt at them, but, scenting no meat, set off to look for game of their own. The older woman stopped at the tunnel that led into the largest igloo, and crawled in on

her knees, Chan-tie following. Within, the light spread dimly, revealing a blackened dome pierced by a small square hole through which a spot of sky looked strangely blue. Over against the wall an old man lay on a deer-skin and stared at them with blank eyes. In the middle of the igloo a hole was cut, and the clean, green water lipped its dirty edge; around and against the circular wall the floor was raised, and here fur robes and greasy deer-skin clothing lay in heaps.

Kug-yi-yuk stooped over the old man. His face was drawn like parchment, and the cheek bones stood out sharp and white. "Oul-i-but is hungry," she said softly.

Her husband raised himself slowly and lifted his dim eyes to her own, "I will eat now," he whispered weakly, "and then eat no more!"

"It is the end," wailed Kug-yi-yuk, throwing herself face down beside him.

Oul-i-but looked at her for a moment, his features like a mask, and turned to Chan-tie. "You have heard," he said dominantly, "I would eat."

Chan-tie returned his stare, but there was

wonder and terror in her own, then she picked up a copper knife. Its blade was long and of the yellow metal that lies in lumps on the shore of Victoria Land, and its haft, a dull brown wood, was teak, from the bones of a vanished British ship.

Her father followed every movement, for Chan-tie was slow and did things with a dull deliberation, but Oul-i-but had reasons for not being in a hurry. She hacked a piece of ice, fresh water ice, from the blackened walls of the igloo, punched a hole in it and put a wooden skewer through the hole. Then she found a shallow stone lamp, of the shape that was used on the hills of Thrace two thousand years before, and into the lamp put a handful of moss, and over the moss poured seal oil. Then with flint, steel and touchwood from her fire bag, and a few short vigorous strokes, and a careful puffing of round fat cheeks, the oil rippled into a yellow white flame. Lastly, she put the lamp nearly under the piece of ice that swung on the skewer in the wall, and watched it drip slowly into a pan.

All of this Oul-i-but saw, and, tottering to the hole took Kug-yi-yuk's fish hook in his trembling fingers and with weak skilfulness fastened it to a long line of twisted sinew. The end of this he passed over a forked-stick and attached it to a string of dew-claws that quivered and sounded with the slightest motion. He sat motionless. Behind him lay Kug-yi-yuk in a heaving heap, and, in front, Chan-tie held out blubber and a bowl of water, but Oul-i-but moved not.

An hour passed. Outside, the noises of camp came faintly, dogs barked and men called—and then—suddenly the string of dew-claws trembled and tinkled. Oul-i-but snatched at the taut line and pulled nervously, and it came in through his lean fingers till below, in the green depths, the lithe shape of a salmon flashed at the end of his quivering line. Then, as the water heaved, the old arms tired. Instantly the great fish plunged, the hook parted, and the sinew lay slack in Oul-i-but's grasp.

He peered at the line and pressed it between his bony finger-tips. Kug-yi-yuk had lifted her head and stared at him from the floor, Chan-tie's

eyes, big with wonder and fear, were fixed on him. He stood up very gently, drew in the line and laid it in a coil at his feet: "Bring Nun-ok," he said slowly, "I would see Nun-ok."

At the words Kug-yi-yuk wailed anew and crawled to her husband's feet, "Wait, Oul-i-but, wait. Not now."

But Oul-i-but only said wearily, "I am very tired, and I must go," and motioned to Chan-tie who got down on her knees and crawled shapeless into daylight. Then there was silence in the igloo save for the old woman's sobs, and over the lamp the ice dripped slowly into the bowl, and strange shadows of Oul-i-but's figure were thrown on the curving wall, till Nun-ok, the Bear—the son-in-law of Oul-i-but, shuffled in. He was short and broad, and the black hair lay sleek in a straight line above his beady black eyes. He knew what was coming, so waited till the old voice sounded again.

"Oul-i-but is weary. I would go as a chief of my tribe, and, since I have many years, I will go to-morrow."

Nun-ok's heart stirred within him. Thirty

years ago, Oul-i-but had taken him hunting. In mid-winter he had taught him to fish, and whiled away the long darkness with tales and ancient legends of the Arctic. In the spring he used to guide him to the sleeping walrus and stand between the lad and a quick death in green water. In the summer, when the bands of caribou does came north to drop their young, it was Oul-i-but who saw that the boy fleshed his long copper knife, and so, through all the seasons of danger and ease, of plenty and of hunger, Oul-i-but walked beside Nun-ok till manhood came to the young hunter and he took Chan-tie to wife.

Nun-ok had seen much of death—he had lived on the narrow edge of it for years, and many old men had departed on the way that Oul-i-but would go. So he did not mind that so much, but it also meant that the tribe would have to move, and this was regrettable, for, opposite where the grey rocks came down to the rim of the land, there was a cliff, and beyond the cliff a flat expanse over which one could drive the caribou to their plunging destruction. Therefore he knew that this summer

he would not see the fat, grey, tumbling deer drop smashing on to the pointed rocks, as they had the summer before. But also remembering many things he looked long and understandingly at Oul-i-but till he caught the old man's eyes, and in them brooded the mystical shadow of mortality. So with full leadership pending over him, Nun-ok drew himself up as becomes a leader, and said, "To-morrow my father shall go as a chief goes."

The women watched Oul-i-but for a time after Nun-ok departed, for there was something in the finality of the men's speech that had answered all their questionings. He no longer seemed ancient and helpless, for was he not a wise traveller about to take the most wonderful journey of all. In the season of the year, drifting ice-fields, carefully chosen, were used to carry the tribes to their hunting and fishing grounds. That was a long journey and a slow one. But Oul-i-but, brave chief, was going on a still longer journey to still better hunting-grounds, and never before was he so sure of the journey's end. The peoples that suck at the paps of a fruitful earth are not thereby

rendered brave and tender, but rather those, who, in the stark and iron-bound wilderness, wage an endless war against danger and famine. So it was that his kin turned with love to Oul-i-but. There was no more place for tears or lament, his going was settled and honour should attend him. Nun-ok the Bear, passed the word to Aiv-ik the Walrus, and Tuk-tu the Caribou, and from the naming of these men it may be seen that they were hunters all. They met as the Arctic night came down, and, ere the shimmering Aurora had reached its zenith, the last igloo of Oul-i-but took form. Twenty feet in diameter the base blocks circled, and Nun-ok stood inside, deftly locking them together as they rose with diminishing sweep.

Soon the white dome was out of reach, and he cut a block of his own and stood on it, while Aiv-ik and Tuk-tu swung their long knives beneath the ripples of red, and yellow and green that spilled out of the wonderful arch of flame overhead. There was no waste of time or energy as the igloo rounded and closed its perfect curve. Then Nun-ok cut a six-inch square hole in the middle of the roof, hewed his way out at the

floor line, builded the exit and the tunnel, and, on top, stuck a gleaming walrus tusk, that all men might know that this was the house of death.

With the grey of dawn a whisper ran through the camp, and, ere morning came, the great igloo was seen, a little way apart, broad and high, with the walrus tusk glinting on its top. Then they all knew, and Oul-i-but himself tottered over and scanned it as closely as his dim eyes might, and, feeling the slow curve of its rising walls, his soul was glad, for, in his memory, no chief had gone away in so big an igloo as that. So he went slowly back and told Kug-yi-yuk and Chan-tie that all was well, and asked for the things that he had made, and found and treasured all his life.

The hearts of the women, having put away their weeping, were charged with a great desire to serve this wayfarer, and they brought, first, his copper knife and the short spear with the steel head that bit through the walrus hide and sank deep, while the haft shot up to the surface through troubled waters. Also his long steel knife that he got from the Englishman who sought the end of the earth, even though

Oul-i-but told him that only death lived there; and he had seen the Englishman once again, after blowing the snow off his face as he lay in the place of death. Then Kug-yi-yuk found his flint that came from Lind Island where Victoria Strait turns north to the ocean, and the steel and finger ring that the captain of a whaler had given him for a white bearskin.

All these things were placed beside the old man, and the women ransacked far corners and brought out new caribou robes, a fishing line and hooks, and a lamp; all new and fit for the use of the departing chief; and his fingers were trembling among them when Nun-ok thrust in his broad shoulders. "It is ready, my father."

Oul-i-but climbed to his feet, and, for a space, turned his eyes slowly to all parts of the igloo. Nun-ok and the women were silent and motionless, while, for a long time, the old man stood with lips parted in an inaudible whisper of farewell to his home. He stooped and won painfully into daylight. At the mouth of every mound grey figures stood watching his fated steps, and the wolfish dogs crouched without a quiver, their

jaws gaping like spots of crimson picked out with glistening fangs. On one side lifted the black cliffs, and, to the north, the level ice blinked league after league to the place of death that the Englishman had found.

So he passed through the watching tribe to his last home, and Chan-tie and Kug-yi-yuk spread the robes and others brought food; deer meat from the last great hunt of last summer, and walrus flesh of the day before, and long strips of soft, delicate blubber; fish stiffened in the frost, and leaves of the tea muskeg that they had got from Yellow Knife Indians near the Bay. The hunting had been good all winter and the traveller was glad of it; for, when one is going to the best country of all, it is much more comfortable to leave one's tribe in a state of happiness and plenty than in misery and want.

Then his friends trooped in with kindly words, trooped in till the place was carpeted with small, round, brown men, whose quick narrow eyes swung restlessly from Oul-i-but to the meat. So the feasting began, and they ate as do those who need neither fire nor water for existence.

He watched them—these friends, tried and true. He did not touch flesh. His figure was tense and rigid, his eyes more blind than ever, but within moved memories, stirred into life by this parting feast and the faces around him. The women had gone, for this was man's business, and Kug-yi-yuk's devotion was at an end. Thus the hours passed till the eating ceased and the gaze of his guests turned toward him, and all fear and regret and doubt fell away; for the gods of the silent places had spoken to Oul-i-but.

"Unwak, the night has come for me," he said, slowly rising and surveying them with uncertain vision, "and I have asked you to come and eat, that I may say good-bye. I go on a long journey, but at the end will be your friends and mine, who have gone already. But before I go, I would speak of myself that you may remember Oul-i-but, the Shining Ice, that was so long your chief."

Nun-ok, still sucking at a strip of blubber, got up; but Oul-i-but waved him down. "The time will be when you will do all the speaking even as I do now."

The ring of copper-coloured faces swung

toward Nun-ok and, as the beady eyes glanced sidewise at him, the whites of them shone lustrous between their narrow lids. A little murmur, half amused, half indignant, ran through the igloo, then Oul-i-but's tired old voice creaked on:

"It is well that you should remember that I was your chief—that I made this tribe brave and strong." He hesitated a moment, and then shouted weakly, "Who was your greatest hunter?"

The brown men swayed as they sat, and called back "Oul-i-but."

"Who was your strongest man?"

Again the echo thundered, "Oul-i-but was the strongest."

"And now who was the bravest?"

"Oul-i-but," the answer came, but not so certainly as before.

The old man peered from face to face and said bitterly, "Will any come with me on my long journey?"

A hush fell in the igloo. It was as if the black-eyed men were suddenly petrified, and in

the silence could be heard the women's voices outside, calling to the dogs. Oul-i-but's thin lips lifted, showing the rusty teeth and shrunken gums within. "Now—who was the bravest man?"

The still circle twitched into life and the black eyes gleamed. "Oul-i-but," they answered, and this time with no uncertainty.

"I have told you that I am going to see our friends. They will ask about you. What shall I say to your first wife, Aiv-ik?" A grin flashed from man to man. Aiv-ik was troubled, but they knew he must answer. He dared not send word that this second one was either better or worse than the first; he feared trouble at home as much as he did angering a spirit.

"There is nothing to tell," he said sulkily. "I will wait and carry the word myself."

Oul-i-but nodded wisely. "And for my part I will say nothing save what you would have her know. There is a word, however, for yourself ere I go. I bid you change your throwing of the spear. It is well to remember that from your kayack two spears' length is enough. On

the ice the foot tells when it is firmly placed, but you throw from your kayack as from strong ice."

Aiv-ik, not a little angered, got up quickly; but a growl rippled round the silent circle, and Oul-i-but turned to Nun-ok and his trembling arms went about the man's broad shoulders.

"My son will be a great chief and the tribe will grow strong and follow where he leads, and I would speak because you are the new chief. It is easy to go first, and the paddle is like a duck's feather in your hands, and the kayack sings under you when you kill the fat black seals. And it is easy to be wise and brave when the caribou cover the plains like moss, and the salmon and trout feed in the shallow water. All this I have seen long ago before you were children, and my heart is weary with remembering. But when the ice closes up tight, and Un-orri the north wind blows, then the caribou go south to the land of little sticks, and the sky is no longer dark with the goose and the swan and the big grey ducks. The walrus moves slowly along the

bottom of the sea, and only his nose is beyond the water of his blow-hole when he comes up to breathe. Nun-ok, the bear, walks abroad, and he also seeks food, while the she-bear lives and starves beneath the banks of snow that she may bring forth her young. Then also come hunger and the sickness that takes men in their sleep, and then it is that you must remember that you are a chief."

"Even as my father," said Nun-ok, looking at him steadfastly.

The bent figure straightened, and a glimmer lit the fading eyes. "You have spoken. Not till you give yourself for the tribe will you have the heart of a chief."

Nun-ok stooped and fingered the string of dew-claws that lay with the rest of the traveller's gear. "Tell us of these before you go," he said thoughtfully, swinging them into a tinkling rhythm.

The quiet circle leaned forward, imperceptibly closing in. The black eyes grew blacker and brighter, like little sparks of diamond flame in which glittered the lust and fury of the chase.

And into the frenzy of their thoughts dropped Oul-i-but's voice, old, cracked, and weak, but broken and burning with the memory of that great hunt.

"It was a long time ago, before my people came down the narrow water that leads to the big sea where there are no holes in the ice. It was the middle of the winter, and the rest was as I have told you—famine and sickness. Un-orri blew for many days and the ice was thick, and a great white bear came and walked round our igloos and we could see his footmarks at the doors, for he too was very hungry. So, on the third day, the father of Aiv-ik and the father of Tuk-tu went out to kill him, for I was very sick and could not hold my spear. All that day we waited, but they came not, nor heard we any noise of man or bear. So, in the morning of the fourth day, the mother of Tuk-tu, being very hungry was also brave, and walked out to see, and came to a big hummock that was north of the camp. There she saw the father of Aiv-ik and the father of Tuk-tu lying with their faces in the snow and their shirts

torn and bloody, and between them sat the bear, biting at the point of a spear that stuck out of his side. The bear looked, but did not move, and kept on biting at his wound; and she ran very quickly and told me."

Here Oul-i-but's voice rose and grew louder and stronger, and cast away all semblance of age or weakness or the death that awaited him. "I spoke to the spirits and told them that my tribe had need of me, and asked them to take away my sickness and give me strength again. Even as I spoke the strength came, and I rose up, and my back and knees and arms were well again, and I bent my spear with my hands, which no other man has done or can do. So I went to meet the bear."

"He saw me," the old voice rang on, "and he was still biting at his wound; so I called: 'I have come to kill you, and I will give your skull to the dogs.' Still he did not move, so I said: 'It is a rat and no bear that I see;' and then he looked at me, and the blood of my friends was on his breast and head. He was very big and thin, and his eyes were small and red. He came very fast, and I put the butt of my spear in a little hole

in the ice, pointing the blade at the blood on his chest, and when he turned to strike my side I turned also the spear and he ran on it, till it went into his breast as far as my arm is long. So the spear broke in his body, and I struck with my dag till he died with his mouth open to slay me."

The passion died in the old man's tones, the force of them dwindling as he went slowly on. "We drew him to the igloos, also the fathers of Tuk-tu and Aiv-ik, and the tribe ate the bear and I gave his skull to the dogs."

"And my father?" said Aiv-ik.

"And mine?" put in Tuk-tu.

"The tribe was large" whispered Oul-i-but painfully, for his strength was going fast. "Also it was very hungry. We killed no more for many days—but we ate not their spirits, which I shall soon see."

Tuk-tu and Aiv-ik regarded each other silently. It was true—he could not have eaten their spirits.

There fell a hush, and the brown men looked at Oul-i-but. Beneath them, almost imperceptible tremors palpitated through the ice, as the blind

tides set in toward the land, and, even as they looked, the weight of his years fell on the old man and he grew immeasurably aged. None of them spoke for they knew what would come next.

Then, faint and trembling, he said, "I go before, but we shall meet again. I am old and very weak, but where I go there is food and rest and happiness. Remember me, for I am very weary and would say good-bye."

The nearest man rose, put his hands on the traveller's shoulders, kissed him on mouth and brows, and, stooping, crawled out of the igloo, and, after him, came another and another, kissing the dim eyes, caressing the bent figure, till there was only Nun-ok left. And last, the new chief held the old one closely to him for a moment, gazing earnestly into the withered face, expressing courage, affection, hope, and farewell—all these in a mute understanding way. Then he looked about and saw that the remnants of food were properly placed, that the fishing line was in order, that the deerskin robes were dry and comfortable.

Now the moment had come when Oul-i-but should not see any more of earth, and Nun-ok

caressed him for the very last time. "I will remember, my father," he whispered, with his arms around the old man's neck, then he, too, stooped and disappeared. The traveller stared at the mouth of the tunnel. It threw a patch of reflected light that spread with soft radiance in this fine new igloo of his. Then the patch changed and lessened, and the igloo grew darker; and soon it took strange irregular forms and vanished altogether, till he looked up and caught the pin-point of a star through the six-inch hole overhead.

Nun-ok had crawled out into the centre of a little crowd, and, since a chief must serve a chief, he had silently placed the blocks that sealed the igloo for ever. Also he found that the women had packed the tribe's possessions in sledges, had harnessed the dogs, and men and women alike waited his command.

The Arctic day had dwindled, and in the north flashed the first banners of a great Aurora. Whatever of darkness there was, seemed luminous, and away southward, to east and west, loomed the black cliffs of Great Bear Point. There were

no shadows of a storm, and the ice lay before them clean and hard.

Now the spirit of a chief is one worthy of reverence. It was, therefore, the custom of the little brown men to travel for a day and a night in order that it might not be hurt or soiled in its passage by sound or sight of mortals. Furthermore, since the weight of their life bore heavily on them, and distress and hunger were brothers to all, it was written that one hungered or in danger might use the igloo of death. He must, however, make sure that the spirit was gone, and then the robes, the flint and steel, and all that was there might be used with reverence and care. If he had wherewith to pay, he should pay, but, if not, he should bless the spirit and depart, leaving all things in order.

At a sign from Nun-ok they drew off a little on the first step of their journey, then the sledges and the little people halted in an irregular curve, their faces toward the igloo. For a moment there was a silence as of death. The great Aurora blossomed into a fiery spray and rippled into a marvellous riot of life, beside which the winking

stars looked pale and thin. Gusty waves of colour trembled through it from end to end, while it shot forth spears and arrows and battalions of light, that seemed to drown and engulf everything in the purple sky. The tribe saw it, but noted not, save that it spoke of troubled weather; they were waiting for a sign, and presently the sign came.

Nun-ok raised his hand, and there floated across the stark ice to Oul-i-but the farewell call of his people. It was the cry of those who face danger to one who has fought his last fight, the voice of the fear and courage and mystery and love that broods in the hearts of the men of the far north, and it rang sharp and clear up toward the stars, and it drifted into the igloo of Oul-i-but. "Good-bye," they called. "We shall meet again. Good-bye, Oul-i-but, good-bye."

The old man raised his head at the sound of it, for he was still watching the place on the floor where the patch of light had died. These were the last voices he should hear on earth. For a little time he would mark the trembling of the ice and the press of the north wind past his igloo.

He would catch a few fish, and eat and rest, and then he would go to sleep, and not notice anything any more till he woke up in the far country among his old friends. But this last call must be answered, so, with effort and failing strength he climbed on Nun-ok's block and put his mouth as near as he might to the hole in the roof, and sent out his soul in one last word to his people.

Faintly it lifted, for the end was not far away. Still fainter it came down the wind, where waited the black-eyed fur-clad men, while the black-nosed bushy-tailed dogs lay on the snow and bit at the ice between their toes. At the sound of it, they called again, more clearly, more strongly, and then stood motionless for the answer.

But all they heard was Un-orri, the North Wind, talking to himself, as he came down from the land of the white death.

PILOTS OF THE NIGHT

Bill, the driver, is sitting aloft, with a face like a hot cross bun,
And his overalls are spotted with grease and his eyes are rimmed with grime,
But he's pulled a couple of hundred souls and maybe a thousand ton
Through the muck of a long midwinter night, and the Limited is on time :—
You bet !
The Limited is on time.

Sitting alone with a smile on his face, and, say, looking down at you,
And wondering whether you know or care or ever will understand
What it means to handle a thousand ton in a fog as sticky as glue,
With a slippery rail and a tricky valve and a damnably leaky gland :—
That's what !
A damnably leaky gland.

So he rams a finger into his pipe and slow to the yard he wins,
To herd the bulk of his big machine where the rest of the bullgines are,
To join himself to a gruff-voiced group, where fellows with square cut chins
Drop in from their long harangues with death and chasing the morning star :—
Well, yes !
From chasing the morning star.

PILOTS OF THE NIGHT

ELECTRIC locomotive No. 4032 slid quietly out of the darkness and cushioned gently against the coupler of the forward baggage car of No. 26. She was low, flat, and black, a crouching double-nosed monster. She gave you the impression that the faster she went the closer she would lie to the rail—which, indeed, was very much the case. There was nothing of the lofty, dignified, and somewhat supercilious locomotive appearance about her. She had no stack, no rods, no cylinders, no tender. She was sheared and shorn, naked and unashamed. She carried no coal and no water, and her entrails were of carbon and copper and steel.

From the cab window I looked back along the shining Pullmans. They were swallowing their nightly freight of unimpressionable inhabitants. It seemed strange that not one of them even glanced forward to the business end of the train.

"Do they never come up here?" I asked Cassin, the engineman, whose elbow touched my own.

"The ladies bring the children, sometimes. See the pretty engine," he added quizzically. Then, with a swift glance at an illuminated dial, "Sit over there, we're pulling out."

Far back, opposite the middle of the train, a blue-coated man raised his arm. Cassin pushed his controller handle delicately forward, with little fractional movements. On the instant, vivid flashes of blue flame ripped out in narrow passages that ran each way from the cab. I had a glimpse of interlocking contacts that gripped and spurted fire and released one another. From beneath our feet rose the grumble of the driving-gears.

The locomotive weighed one hundred tons, and the train weighed eight hundred, but No. 4032 laid her long, black nose between the rails and pulled till one expected her straining bowels to burst asunder. It seemed an eternity till the tumult subsided. It was hard to believe that this mechanical frenzy was born in the whirring dynamos at Yonkers; that it came, docile along

its aerial filaments, to animate this inflexible demon. Within a coach length the skidding drivers bit hard on the clean rail and we rolled smoothly into the tunnel. The great tube stretched ahead like a gleaming causeway. And, just as our ears began to throb with the weight of the trembling atmosphere, we boomed out into the night and the million windows of New York stared at us, Argus-eyed. But Cassin was not interested in New York. His left hand was on the controller. There were little straightenings and contractions of the arm, swift glances at his quivering dials, and a steady, relentless staring ahead at a myriad of signals, green on green, red on red, green and red in every possible combination and position. These were his masters, these his voiceless arbiters; and, just as I was wondering how any one pair of eyes, however keen, could interpret them, I became conscious that his helper was staring as fixedly forward.

"All right," said Cassin. "All right," said his helper. It was not one brain, but two, that were at work; and all through the night, on each successive division, it was the same, this

sharp cross-fire of "All right" across the heaving iron floor.

New York from the smoking compartment and New York from the engine cab are two different cities. One is interesting, imposing, and picturesque. The other is vital, compelling, and intensely human. You are an onlooker in one case, and a participator in the other. A participator, in virtue of the fact that you are beginning to see things as they are, your eyes are being opened to what men of one kind expect from men of another. Should this appear enigmatic, the reason may be evident before you climb out of the cab at Buffalo.

Across the Harlem we swayed through locked switches till the northerly ridge of Manhattan Island curved its brilliant back above the polo grounds. Then, almost beneath the reverberating arches of High Bridge, No. 4032 slipped away into the darkness with a smooth, contented purring of her motors. She had pulled us out of the city. That was her limit, and she would shortly pull in a Pittsburg flyer. She was metropolitan. She paralleled Broadway.

The night was cold, and No. 4017 was festooned with little wreaths of steam that clung to her gigantic outline as she backed noiselessly out of the gloom. Compared to the electric, she was blatant and obvious, but hugely and magnificently so. There were no technical mysteries about her. Everything stood out sharply and nakedly. And Harrington, her lord and master, was, in face and form, just such a personality as should rule this metallic kingdom. He was big and loose-jointed, rosy-cheeked and blue-eyed. There was the clean, strong line of face and chin that betrays what the Scotch call a "magerful" man. To see him start the ten Pullmans was an education. He had all the delicacy of touch of the trained horseman who knows his horse. Little by little, taking and giving, he laid his engine to her work, and beneath him the great machine responded with long-drawn breath and a volcanic coughing of smoke and vapour.

Under the tension of the start it seemed impossible that a man-made contrivance could withstand the strain. From front and rear came

a thousand querulous voices, the individual complaint of integral and burdened parts. They revolted against stress and weight. But, as speed increased, these gradually smoothed themselves out into a cradle of interlinking sound and vibration. No. 4017 had got down to her work. There was just a steady snore of hurtling momentum, cushioned against the hum of the swaying coaches behind.

Harrington sat motionless, leaning forward on his right elbow, his left hand constantly grasping the throttle. He was the brain and nerve centre of the cab, but he contributed nothing to the almost savage activity that possessed his fireman. The latter moved swiftly. His left foot pressed a flattened lever and the fire-doors yawned under the force of compressed air. From within, small, arrow-headed flames spat out and licked the rivet-heads around the opening. Into the white heart of the furnace swung the coal. Be it noted that none was spilled, though the opening was but three inches wider than the shovel—and this at fifty miles an hour.

The fireman moved from the shovel to the

injector, that sucked water from the tender into the long, black barrel of the boiler; from the injector to the air-vent on the tank—for by now No. 4017 was scooping a thousand gallons a minute from a trough that lay gleaming a mile long between the rails; from the air-vent to cast keen glances ahead where the green and red signals hung in suspended clarity, and to shoot back a sharp "all right" to the motionless man in blue overalls. The train plunged deeper into the night, and, as the glow of the fire-box illuminated the great white plume of steam that trailed from our lifting valves, the reflection of this lithe figure was cast upward against its fleecy surface. It was suspended over the sleeping passengers, a vast shadowed and toiling spirit, symbolical of those who labour in darkness that others may slumber in safety.

All these things were so compelling, with a certain dominant reiteration, that one was prone to forget the ghostly country we traversed. At Yonkers we flashed by the delicate masts of a fleet of tenantless yachts. Sing Sing palpitated with the brilliancy that streamed from its bare

exterior galleries and the white expanse of its incommunicable walls. Suddenly there glittered an insistent, dazzling ray from the search-light of a river steamer. Its beam flickered uncertainly up and down the green shores opposite, till, swinging with inconceivable rapidity, it poured on us and flooded and followed us. The rest of the world, signals and all, vanished utterly. Then the ray lifted and leaped and dropped hawklike on the hills again.

West Point slid past us in long lines of ordered lights that dipped to the water's edge. The great mass of Storm King shouldered heavenward, and, hundreds of feet beneath us, men delved in subterranean solitude, to bring the springs of the mountain tops to the greatest city of the New World.

Poughkeepsie and the high skeleton of its bridge dropped behind. The fairy step-ladder of the Otis inclined railway reared its jewelled and tenuous length into the night and vanished. Another element obtruded itself—time. One could neither gauge nor approximate this. And yet we had moved with precision; our varying

speed had subordinated itself to stops and starts. We were on time—that was felt. And, pondering this, one became slowly conscious of the subjective co-ordination, the human and mechanical alliance, that controlled the safety of lives behind us, the safety of average, particular, hard-to-please, apt-to-complain travellers.

From Albany, another engine, with Hisgen at the throttle, faced the steep ascent from the fat river meadows to the Mohawk valley plains. Hisgen showed what an engine would stand. He was imperative and relentless. Here, more than anywhere, one was conscious of the enormous drag of the heavy train. The whole panting framework expended itself it such effort as almost drew pity for its gigantic struggles. The jumping needle on the steam-gauge dropped a point. The fireman swung his shovel more and more incessantly. Then, just when it seemed that this superhuman progress must end in ruin, the engine found herself. The orchestra swung gradually through the crescendo to an ultimate and magnificent fortissimo. The grade was climbed. It was the acme of co-operation, one that responded

gallantly to a man in overalls, the passionless director of this tempest of power.

At the top of the hill the repair shops glowed with a green, unearthly light from Cooper Hewitt lamps. We had a vision of swarms of ant-like men attacking inert locomotives, amputating and patching. Then these faded away in a sudden fog that settled on the earth like a blanket.

Into it we raced blindly. I looked for the wrinkles on Hisgen's sleeve, for these were the only visible signs when he reduced speed. But the arm moved not. He was staring forward. The thick vapour penetrated the cab, striking cold and damp. Then a glare sprang up directly ahead. We plunged to meet it. In a fraction of time No. 42 from Chicago swayed past in a blur of velocity and fled roaring southward.

The fog lifted and revealed a long line of dredges blazing with light and eating their way through the flat loam fields. Here would shortly be the Barge Canal, miles of it already constructed. We passed them rapidly in a smooth run that laid the miles contentedly behind, till steam was cut off and we coasted luxuriously into Syracuse.

And at Syracuse came Hoff, a veteran of the road, whose rugged features softened into a wintry smile at the sight of the third man in the cab. An hour later it was seen what manner of driver Hoff was.

The wind pressure was ramming into face and eyes, searching them with a keen hardness that spoke of speed. I looked inquiringly at the fireman, for, be it known, silence is something more than golden on an engine. He raised five grimy fingers twice. We were making nearly a mile a minute.

Suddenly Hoff's left arm straightened in a pull, and instantaneously I peered ahead. Low down, near the track, was a spot of red, infinitely small and distant; it swung in a tiny arc across the rail. Hoff moved with an almost vicious certitude and the air went on. Then, as the whirring drivers bit at the cold steel beneath them, my mind leaped to passengers! Up to that moment they had been remote—unreal.

But now the ponderous Pullmans closed up and thrust us forward with inconceivable weight. I had a vision of hundreds of unconscious forms

relaxed in sleep—forms that swayed gently in their gigantic cradle, oblivious of everything, and, above all, of the supreme tension of that moment. In this enormous effort there flashed on me the gulf that yawned between them and the grim-faced man who was still master of himself and his machine. The red point grew and swung the faster, and, just as Hoff was reaching for the reverse lever, we stopped dead beside it.

Nearly a thousand tons, nearly a mile a minute, but bitted, bridled, and curbed in five hundred yards.

So much for nerve and mechanics, but mark what followed. Hoff leaned far out and spoke to an invisible figure below. Then he drew in sharply and coaxed the train into motion. His face had changed and hardened. The two steel pin-points into which his eyes had contracted grew sharper. Not a word was said, but his jaw projected till it looked like the ram of a Dreadnought.

Later, I knew why. We had been flagged by a brakeman who moved in the darkness on the wrong track. He had held up the Limited. To him it meant something more than a reprimand. To Hoff it meant sixty-five miles an hour till day-

break. To me it meant a lesson of self-control. There were no words wasted. In the breathless period that followed I saw man and machine at their uttermost, for Hoff took the very last pound of steam that the boiler would give him. The engine swayed horribly as she hit the curves, swayed till it seemed she must plunge in ruin from the delicate ribbons over which she thundered. But Hoff sat inflexible, and, at daybreak, the Limited was on time.

The dawn greeted us with a suggestion of widening horizon and a softening of the sharp outline of signal lamps. It was not so much the spreading of light as the hesitant withdrawal of gloom, beneath whose dwindling skirts the light seemed to have been always waiting. Then houses, trees, and fences divested themselves of indistinctness.

Rochester loomed bare, black, and empty beneath this pitiless revelation, but at Batavia the morning had marched on to that humanizing period when night yields up her sleepers. From the cab window this vanguard of early workers looked strangely individualistic on its way to factory and forge. Is was as if we ourselves were completing

a journey from some remote asteroid, and, after countless questioning leagues of darkness, had arrived, at last, on some more normal and firmly established planet. And now that the straight track stretched clear ahead to Buffalo, I longed that the great army of travellers could have looked into the cab of the Limited. All through the night the belching fire-doors had painted two figures with momentary and lurid life. The cold stare of morning told another story. The fireman, sheathed with grime, still swung his tireless shovel, but there was a droop in his shoulders, a slackness in his momentary rest that was eloquent. Hoff's left hand still rested on the throttle it had never deserted since we rolled out of the black abyss of Syracuse station. But his face, stained ebony with a million particles of coal-dust, was lined and furrowed like that of one who bears great burdens. For all his strength, and all his mastery, the run had made its mark upon him.

The value of his human freight was perhaps a million dollars, and it lay nightly in the hollow of his hand. I groped for some understanding of what a man gives who gives himself thus. The

steady beam of that clear blue eye seemed to stand for something higher and finer than money value. It stood for the mental side of a marvellous alliance. Civilization demanded transportation. A mechanism was developed, enduring beyond belief, refined to the last degree. And, moving in parallel perfection, the human organism marched with it, till the last conceivable quality of the one linked into responsive union with the other. That was what Hoff and his brothers stood for. Discipline, courage, judgment, self-control. In evidence of which—listen.

A few years ago the brakemen on a great transcontinental system threatened to strike. The traffic of thousands of miles and half a continent was imperiled. The men demanded higher wages, easier hours—in short, considerable betterment. The company demurred. A total stoppage was imminent when the general manager, wise beyond most men, offered to arbitrate before—not a board of lawyers or business men, but a board composed of members of the Locomotive Drivers' Union. The offer was accepted. The board adjudicated fairly and squarely, and their decision abides to

this day. That is why confidence is felt that the railroads and their engineers will find themselves able to solve their difficulties without a conflict.

Now turn the shield in the drama of the road. All down the curtained aisles people were slowly shaking off their sleep, drowsily wondering whether they were on time. Porters were answering insistent bells. Every luxurious appointment of the train found its use. The hotel on wheels was alive again. Here and there, across dainty tables, men discussed the disgraceful way in which brakes were put on during early morning. It had broken their dreams. Not a thought of the business end of the train. Not a word of danger or stress or endurance. Not a glimmer of the long vigil, or the tense brain, or the tireless hand on the throttle. These travellers were playing their self-appointed part—on the strength of what? A first-class ticket and berth between the cities of New York and Buffalo.

At Buffalo Hoff leaned at the cab window, and beside him I watched the departing travellers. He looked down, immobile and toil-stained. They did not look at Hoff. They took him for granted.

THE ESSENCE OF A MAN

By portage, pack and tumpline,
By mountain top and trail,
By creek and lake, by swamp and brake
The ancient laws prevail :
The hunter to his quarry
Shall come as night to day,
But, at the last, the fur is passed
Into the Hudson Bay :

The wolverine and otter
Full ponderously go,
The fox and mink light footed slink
Across the driven snow ;
But, through the winter weather,
Men know one right of way,
The trail that bends but lastly ends
Within the Hudson Bay :

Now since the life is bitter
And death is next of kin,
And perils wait without the gate
When cowards sleep within ;
" Let one deceive his neighbour "
" An outcast shall he stray,"
" We have no meat for thieves to eat,"
Thus saith the Hudson Bay.

THE ESSENCE OF A MAN

THROUGH level lines of streaming snow, a huge figure loomed large and portentous. Vanishing in blinding gusts, it ever and ever appeared again, thrusting itself onward with dogged persistence. Across flat and frozen plains forged the great piston-like legs, driving down his snowshoes with a clocklike regularity that suggested, rather than told of, enormous muscular force. Behind him, knee-deep, toiled five yellow-coated, black-muzzled dogs, their shoulders jammed tight into their collars, their tawny sides rippling with the play of straining tendons; and, last of all, a long, low toboggan lurched indomitably on, the trampled trail breaking into a surge of powdered snow under its curving bow.

Into the teeth of the gale pushed this pigmy caravan—a gale that was born on the flat shores of Hudson Bay, that breasted the slopes of the

Height of Land, that raged across the blank white expanse of Lac Seul, and was now shrieking down, dire and desolate, to the ice-bound and battlemented borders of Lake Superior. It was a wind that had weight. Tom Moore felt its vast and impalpable force, as he leaned against it, when he stopped for breath. It assaulted him—it tore steadily, relentlessly, at him, as if seeking to devour—it lashed the stinging grains into his face, and into the open mouths of his panting dogs—it smoothed out the crumpled trail as the wake of a ship is obliterated by closing waters—till, a moment after his passing, the snow ridges lay trackless and unruffled. Still, however insignificant in these formless wastes, that silent progress held steadily on; and so it had held from early morn. These black specks on a measureless counterpane, guided by some unfailing instinct that lurked far back in the big half-breed's brain, were making an unswerving line for a wooded point that thrust out a faint and purple finger, far ahead in the gathering dusk. As they drew slowly in, the wind began to abate its force, and

Tom, peering out from the mass of ice that was cemented to his mouth and eyes, looked for some sheltering haven. The dogs smelled the land, and more eagerly flung themselves into the taut traces, while over them gathered the shadows of the welcome woods.

Peter Anderson, the Hudson Bay factor at Lac Seul, was low in provisions, and had sent to the Ignace post a curt suggestion that the deficiency be supplied; and Tom Moore's laden toboggan was the brief but practical answer to his letter. The three-hundred-pound load was made up of the bare necessities of life—pork, flour, and the like; these, delivered, would be worth seventy-five cents a pound and thirty dollars a sack respectively; and Tom was the arbiter of transportation. In summer his canoe thrust its delicate bows through the water-ways that interlaced the two posts, and in winter his snowshoes threaded the stark and frozen wilderness. He had always travelled alone on the ice. Nature had moulded him with such a titan frame, so huge and powerful a body, so indomitable and fearless a soul, that he had become accustomed to

laughing at the fate that overtook many of his tribe. They disappeared every now and then, utterly, silently, and mysteriously; but ever Big Tom moved on, the incarnation of force and of life that mocked at death.

When, two days before, MacPherson had summoned him to the Ignace post, and pointed to the pile of provisions, and said laconically: "For Anderson, at Lac Seul," Tom had merely grunted, "How," and set out to harness his dogs. But the last day had brought him more serious reflection. By the flight of the goose it was two hundred miles and by the winter trail perhaps two hundred and fifteen; and of these forty now lay behind him.

He made his camp, he lit his fire, he flung to each ravenous dog a frozen whitefish, and ate, himself, almost as sparingly; then, rolled in his rabbit-skin blanket, he lay down on his back, and looked up at the winking stars.

About midnight the wind changed and veered into the south-east, bringing with it a clammy drizzle, half snow, half rain, that plastered the trees with a transparent enamel, and spread over

the surface of the earth a sheet of ice, half an inch thick, and exceeding sharp.

In that shivering hour which heralds the dawn, a branch cracked sharply a little distance from the camp. One of the dogs twitched an ear, and Tom was too deep in sleep to notice it. The five huskies were buried in snow beneath a tree, from a branch of which swung a sheaf of rigid fish, suspended in the air for security. But, in the half light, something moved, a something that turned upon the smouldering fire great luminous eyes—globes that seemed to receive the glow of dull coals, and give it out again in a changing iridescence. Around the eyes was a white-gray mask, crowned by short-black-pointed ears; behind the ears moved noiselessly a tawny body, with heavy legs and broad, soft pads. It slipped from tree to tree, touching the ground lightly here and there, till the great lynx hung, motionless and menacing, above the sleeping camp. It stopped, sniffed the tainted air, and then stared, fascinated, at the sheaf of fish, which hung, slowly revolving, in tantalizing proximity. Silently, with dainty and delicate caution, the lynx

laid itself out on the branch, and, clinging tight, stretched out a curved forepaw; it just touched its object, and set it swaying. Again the paw went out, and again fell short. A quicker thrust, and the big pads slipped on the frozen wood, and, with a scream, the great cat fell fair on the sleeping dogs.

In an instant the air split with a frenzy of noise. Tom sprang up, and saw a maelstrom of yellow forms, a convulsive, contorted mass, from which came the vicious snap of locking jaws, the yelp of agonized animals, and the short, coughing bark of the lynx. Around and in and out they rolled, buried in fur and snow. The wolf was born again in the huskies, and, with all their primal ferocity, they assailed each other and a common enemy. Two of them crawled away, licking great wounds from deadly claws; and then gradually the battle waned, till it died in a fugue of howls, and the marauder escaped, torn and bleeding, into the silence from which he came.

Tom stood helpless, and then, when the three came limping home, went over to where his two best dogs lay, licking great gashes—for the lynx

had literally torn them open. As he approached, they lifted their black lips, till the long fangs shone, ivory white; and death and defiance gurgled in their throbbing throats. A glance told him that nothing could be done; the frost was already nipping the raw flesh till they snapped at their own vitals in desperation. He raised his axe, once, twice—and his two best huskies lay on a blanket of blood-stained snow, with twitching bodies and glazing eyes.

Then, very soberly, he examined the others. They were still fit for harness; so, in the yellow light that began to flood the world, he shortened his traces, twisted his feet into his toe straps, and, with never a look behind, faced again the burden of the day.

The trail was hard to break. The crust, that would not carry the dogs, was smashed down, and tilted cakes of ice fell over on his shoes, a deck load that made them a weariness to lift. Behind floundered the toiling huskies, the leader's nose glued to the tail of the trailing shoes. What vast reserve of strength did man and beast then draw upon, Tom could not have told you; but, hour

after hour, the small, indomitable train went on. As the day lengthened, Tom shortened his stride; for the dogs were evidently giving out, and his thigh muscles were burning like hot wires. At four o'clock the team stopped dead, the leader swaying in his tracks. The big half-breed, runing his hands over the shaking body, suddenly found one of them warm and wet—it was sticky with blood. Then he saw blood on the trail; looking back, he saw crimson spots as far as the eye could distinguish them; lifting the matted hide, he revealed a gash from which oozed great, slow drops. The valiant brute had drained his life out in a gory baptism of that killing trail. Then Tom sat down in dumb despair, took the lean yellow head upon his knees, smoothed the tawny fur back from those clouding eyes, and set his teeth hard as the dying beast licked his caressing hand in mute fidelity.

The great frame grew rigid as he watched, and slowly into the man's mind, for the first time in all his life, came doubt. Perhaps it was more of wonderment. It was not any suggestion of failing powers, imminent danger, or impending hardships;

it was rather a mute questioning of things which he had always heretofore accepted, as he did the rising and sinking of the sun—things which began and ended with the day. His reasonings were slow and laborious; his mind creaked, as it were, with the effort—like an unused muscle, it responded with difficulty. Then, finally, he saw it all.

Long ago, when his mother died, she had warned him against the false new gods which the white man had brought from the big sea water, and in her old faith had turned her face to the wall of her teepee. She had been buried in a tree top, near a bend of the Albany River, where it turns north from Nepigon and runs through the spruce forests that slope down to Hudson's Bay. But Tom had listened to the new story—more than that, he had hewed square timber for the Mission Church at Ignace; and now—retribution had come, at last. No sooner had the idea formulated itself, than it seized upon him; and then there rose to meet it—defiance. Grimly, he slackened the collar from the dead husky, and laid the empty traces across his own breast; savagely he thrust forward, and started the toboggan, and the

diminished company stayed and stopped not till, once again, the darkness came.

That night the two surviving dogs eyed him furtively, when he flung them their food. They did not devour it ravenously, as was their custom; but crouched, with the fish under their paws, and followed, with shifting look, every move he made. He was too weary to care; but, had he watched them an hour later, the sight would have convinced him that there was an evil spirit abroad in those frosty woods.

Noiselessly, they approached his sleeping form, sniffing intently at everything in the camp. He lay, massive and motionless, wrapped in an immense rabbit-skin blanket, one fold of which was thrown over the bag that held his provisions; his giant body was slack, relaxed, and full of great weariness.

The dogs moved without a sound, till they stood over the sleeping man. The long hair rose in ridges along their spines, as they put their noses to his robe, and sniffed at their unconscious master; for, whether it was the fight with the lynx, or that yellow body out on the ice,

some new and strange thing had come into their blood; they had reverted to the primal dog, and no longer felt the burden of the collar or the trace—the labour of the trail had passed from them.

At first, the smell of man repelled them, but it was only for a moment; their lean shoulders swayed as their twitching noses ran over his outline, and then a new scent assailed them. It was the provision bag. Gently, and with infinite precaution, they pulled it. Tom stirred, but only stirred. The sack was trailed out over the snow, and the tough canvas soon gave way before those murderous teeth. In silence, and in hunger, they gorged; what they could not eat was destroyed, till, finally, with bulging sides, they lay down and slept, in utter repletion.

It was the sun on his face that woke Tom to a consciousness of what had happened. He felt for the bag, and, finding it not, looked at the dogs, and, on seeing them, raised his hand in anger. Now, this was a mistake; few dogs will wait for punishment, least of all a half-savage husky who expects it. He approached,

they retreated; he stopped, they squatted on their haunches and eyed him suspiciously; he retreated, they did not move; he held out a fish, they were supremely indifferent. They had entered a new world, which was none of his; they suddenly found that they did not have to obey—and when man or beast reasons thus, it spells ruin. All his arts were exhausted and proved fruitless, and then Tom knew that an evil spirit—a Wendigo—was on his trail.

To push forward was his first instinct. Slowly, he rolled up the blanket, and laced it to the toboggan; and, as the sun topped the rim of the land, the unconquerable breed struck out across the ice, the traces tugging at his shoulders. A few yards behind followed the enfranchized team, drunk with the intoxication of their new-found liberty. Never did he get within striking distance, but ever he was conscious of those soft, padding sounds; he felt as if they were always about to spring at his defenceless back, but all through the weary day they followed, elusive, mysteriously threatening.

He pulled up, faint with hunger, in mid-

afternoon, and went into a thicket of cedar to set rabbit snares; but no sooner had he turned than the dogs were at the toboggan. A ripping of canvas caught his ear, and he rushed back in fury. They fled at his approach, and lay, flat on the snow, their heads between their paws; so Tom pulled up his load, built a fire beside it, and watched the huskies till morning. He had now one hundred miles to go; he had three hundred pounds to pull, and no dogs; he could not, dare not sleep; and he had no food, but—Anderson was waiting at Lac Seul.

Who can enter into those next days? Through the storms—and they were many—moved a gigantic figure, and, after it, crawled a long coffin-like shape; and behind the shape trotted two wolfish forms, with lean flanks and ravenous jaws. Across the crystalline plains plodded the grim procession, and, at night, the red eye of a camp fire flung its flickering gleam on those same threatening forms, as they moved restlessly and noiselessly about, watching and waiting, waiting and watching. As his strength diminished with the miles, Tom began to see strange things, and

hear curious and pleasant sounds. Then he got very sleepy; the snow was just the colour of the twenty-dollar blankets in the H. B. post; it was not cold now; he experienced a delicious langour; and people began to talk all around him; only they wouldn't answer when he shouted at them. Then the Wendigo came, and told him to lie down and rest, and, as he was taking off his shoes, another spirit called out:

"Kago, kago—nebowah neepah panemah."

("Don't, don't! You will find rest by and by.")

At noon, on the eighth day after Tom left Ignace post, Peter Anderson looked across the drifts of Lac Seul, and shook his head. The horizon was blotted out in a blizzard that whipped the flakes into his face like needle points, and the distance dissolved in a whirling view. The bush had been cleared away around his buildings, and, in the bare space, a mighty wind swooped and shrieked. As he turned, the gale lifted for a moment, and, infinitely remote, something appeared to break the snow line at the end of a long white lane of dancing wreaths; then the storm closed

down, and the vision was lost. Keenly, he strained through half-closed lids; once more something stirred, and, suddenly, the wind began to slacken. In the heart of it was staggering a giant shape, that swayed and tottered, but doggedly, almost unconsciously, moved on into the shelter of the land; behind trailed a formless mass, and, last of all, the apparitions of two lank, limping dogs.

Drunkenly and unseeingly, but with blind, indomitable purpose, the man won every agonizing step. His snow-shoes were smashed to a shapeless tangle of wood and sinew; his face was gaunt, patched with grey blots of frost-bite; and, through his sunken cheeks, the high bones stood out like knuckles on a clenched fist. Ice was plastered on his cap, and lay fringed on brow and lids, but beneath them burned eyes that glowed with dull fires, quenchless and abysmal. By infinitesimal degrees he drew in, with not a wave of the hand, not a sign of recognition. Up the path, from shore to trading post, shouldered the titan figure, till it reached the door. At the latch, stiff, frozen fingers were fumbling, as

Anderson flung it open; and then a vast bulk darkened the threshold, swung in helpless hesitation for a fraction of time, and pitched, face foremost, on the rough pine floor.

A few hours later, he looked up from the pile of skins upon which Anderson had rolled him. His eyes wandered to the figure of the trader, who sat, serenely smoking, regarding with silent satisfaction a small mountain of provisions.

"All here, boss?"

"Ay, Tom, all here, and I'm muckle obliged to ye; are ye hungry, Tom? Will ye hae a bit sup?"

"No eat for five days; pull toboggan. No dogs."

Anderson stiffened where he sat. "What's that? Haulin' three hunder' of grub, and ye were starving? Ye big copper-coloured fule!"

"No packer's grub, boss; Hudson Bay grub!"

It was almost a groan, for Tom was far spent.

Involuntarily the quiet Scot lifted his hands in amazement, and then hurried into his kitchen, murmuring, as he disappeared: "Man, man, it's with the likes of ye that the Hudson Bay keeps its word."

THE HOUSE INVISIBLE

Thus, smirking, spake one whom good fortune crowned ;
" Behold my mansion, my memorial trees
That, like green rivers, circle it around ;
My lambent gems from far-off nameless seas,
My canvases and ancient folios, bound
And wrought in virginal and sweet cloistered ease.
Gold, festal song, beauty and love and wine,
All of earth's tribute, all and all—are mine."

Strange, that above his castle's granite tower
Should hang a phantom and deserted hall,
Where nothing stirred to life, and hour by hour
The dust of centuries settled on the wall,
Till painting, folio, and garden bower
Were sifted over with a breathless pall ;
A gulf of silence, so remote and deep
That death seemed nigh forgotten in its sleep.

THE HOUSE INVISIBLE

The great plain stretched before me, vast and untenanted, splashed with odorous flower spaces, wrinkled and alive with the lift of morning winds. To all these I had escaped at the bidding of a new strange instinct, suggestive perhaps rather than dominant, but impellent enough to thrust its delicate pressure through the hardening crust of my own self-approving personality. It was not beauty that had brought me there. I sought nothing that dwelt on the gemmed sod or in the hollow caverns of the wind, nor was I conscious that I evaded anything. A sudden spiritual wander-lust was over me.

Nor had forgetfulness aught to offer. I had borne my years bravely, and the world knew with what measure of success; something of honour had been earned, and riches came with it. I had not stooped to the unclean thing. I loved, and was beloved. But, for all of this, I had become, in

a flash, conscious that there was that I knew not of, a deeper insight which I had never attained, but which might perchance stoop to me, and so I walked abroad in solitude, with every barrier of time and circumstance dismantled.

I knew the plain, for it was my own. From the mansion windows its spherical undulations rippled out and lost themselves in the wideness of that world against which it was a fragrant barricade. In the midst of it the house reposed, and, whatever winds blew, only the breath of wild thyme and clover, of gorse and honeysuckle, traversed the sentinel ranks of my memorial trees. Southward lay the sea, to which the sweet land leaned, and that way I walked.

But half-way between the mansion and the shore I stopped on the brink of a cleft ravine that stretched at my feet, and, most strangely, however well I knew my land, I knew not this ravine. Just as the mind stops, startled at undreamed depths of thought, suddenly discovered, so I halted at this rift that dipped sharply seaward. It was, perhaps, half a mile wide and a mile long. At the bottom was a tarn of still

black water, ringed with a fringe of sand, and to this the hillsides descended smoothly with green encircling slopes. Opposite, within grey stone boundaries, an old house faced the lake, and at the sight I stared round-eyed, and turned till I caught, in the blue distance, the comforting mound of trees around my own mansion. For this old, and yet new, house was indeed the brother of my own in shape and size and proportion, and it looked also as my own would look should a hundred years of forgetfulness enshroud it. Stone for stone, window for window, walk for walk, but devoid of sound and life and any breath of humanity, this strange place lay beneath me, and, gazing, I heard its call.

Approaching the great iron gates, again the replica of my own, I searched in vain for any late intimate or humanising touch; and, forcing them, the rusty hinges creaked stiffly in the motionless air. At once I knew, in some subjective fashion, that I was no stranger here. Across the long, straight garden walk, tangled rose bushes enmeshed themselves into an interlacing network, and there was that in the rose bushes, in the long

walk, in the great gates, and, lastly, in the dead walls facing me, that was eloquent of myself alone. There was, there could be, no asking of where or when. These things were endowed with their own dominant entity—a peculiar individuality which silenced the question before it found expression. The visual confounded the intellectual. I was not breathless or fearful, I seemed only to have turned into a remote by-way that spoke with almost audible emphasis to some long dormant brain-cell, just awakened, to revive its ancient memories. And, realizing this, there was nothing but to go on and break the silence of this mysterious estate.

Ere I gained the door and reached for the corroded knocker I became conscious that my mind was operating with an extraordinarily rapid introspection. This that I was about to discover seemed more nearly, more purely personal, with all its uncertainty, than every intimate and personal relationship I had ever formed. So now, with an absolute abandonment to all that the time and place might yield, I knocked thrice.

The dull clangour filled the house. I could

hear it booming through the halls till its reverberations smoothed out into the hollow silences that brooded everywhere. Then, with an insistence that defied the unreality of its own conception, I knocked again and waited, my eyes fixed on that door I knew must open.

There came presently a sound from within. I remember it as being not so much sound itself as a promise of sound, whispering from distances infinitely more remote than those compassed by the house walls. It was as if something were getting ready to begin to move, something that stretched and stirred in doubt ere its aged sinews were trusted to perform their office.

Again, as the door yielded, I felt no fear. I was staring at a man old beyond understanding, so old that the whiteness of his brows curved down over the brilliancy of eyes that mocked at his own antiquity. His dress was a long tunic, half hidden by the winter of his beard; his shoulders were bent as from the weight of immemorial time, and the hand that trembled on the latch was waxen and shrivelled. He seemed, indeed, the epitome of a senescent humanity, the

cycle of whose years rivalled that of the stars in their courses.

The bent figure inclined still further. "You are expected," he said; and, at the words, I could almost hear centuries slipping into indistinction.

He turned into the long hall, and I followed. On the floor I could see his footmarks in the dust. To right and left stood armour, even as other armour I knew; but this was covered with dust; gorget, brassart, pauldron, and greave; defiled, neglected, and forgotten. Above there were pictures, once more the parallel; but these were lost in the film that had settled on them from the breathless atmosphere. I had been sleeping, sleeping for years, and now returned to my own, to find it mute and wellnigh obliterated, and barren of all attributes save only memories.

Behind the shuffling feet I mounted the great stairway—till the ancient servitor pointed to a closed door, and there he left me. I was conscious, for a moment, of his uncertain footsteps, and when they ceased he had vanished into the void of that Nirvana from which he came.

Then, from the invisible room, a woman's voice

called; a voice unclouded by threat, unsoftened by supplication; and, at the sound of it, the latch yielded and I entered.

There stood the Presence, and instantly my eyes were unsealed. She was not a Deity, but an embodiment of whatever of the Divine was harboured in myself. Each year of my life yielded its memories toward this recognition, and my understanding slowly built itself up to speak.

No man shall describe the Presence. In dreams we may glimpse her. Sometimes, when we sound the depths or scale the heights, the momentary gleam of her robe appears to the vision that has been cleansed by suffering or joy. But always the vision is measured by our weakness.

This knowledge came to me at that instant. "Your name?" I said with reverence.

"I am nameless until I join that other self, whom I know not," came the reply.

"And this house?" I ventured, breathless with mystery.

"Is the house that he has builded for me."

My mind flashed back to the mansion on the scented plain.

"This dust?" I said, wonderingly.

"Listen," she answered; and my consciousness went out to meet her beneath the lifting veil. "All the world over, men build houses for the body and the mind, but what man has guessed that then also is builded the house of the Spirit? Stone for stone, window for window, the one rises with the other. And when all is done, and the hearth fire gleams, then the Spirit takes her habitation."

Her voice ceased. The blank deserted silence of the ghostly place closed in, till, through it, I heard my own utterance—small, thin, and seeming infinitely remote. "There is death here."

"The house of the body speaks of that which is gained," replied the Presence, "but the home of the Spirit of that which is lost."

Vainly I fought for words. Dust, dust! I could think of nothing but dust.

"The armour is stained," went on the gentle voice, "and the roses have closed the paths where I would walk. My house is cold and desolate, and there is only one room left."

"And that room?" I said fearfully.

"*Is the time that is left*," she whispered.

My soul turned to assail me. Blindly I groped for one ray of light in this darkness of my own creation, in this gloom in which my own impotent Spirit was enshrouded. It was only a little room that remained for her to inhabit. It was my own study. A few intimate things were there. I remembered choosing them because they were fraught with attributes of which I could never tire.

"You know not this man?" I said, marvelling.

"Only when my house is pure and fragrant shall I know him." She turned to the window: "Look!"

Beneath it smiled my gardener's cottage, just as I had left it, on the edge of the moorland. It was alive with light, beautiful with love and care, bedded in roses and the songs of birds. As I looked it seemed that the old man himself passed down the trim walks, and the flowers nodded after him.

"He builded better than he knew," I whispered. "Men call him a simpleton."

"What man shall judge another? I would that his house were mine. His Spirit has never

wandered from home, and dwells not in one room." Mystical and transcendant sounded the voice of the Presence. "Man has many habitations, but only one house invisible. Its dust is man's pride, its solitude is man's selfishness, and that which he sometimes counts as lost is its beauty. As he gives, so it is glorified; and when he is humble the house is filled with music."

I gazed at the vision of the gardener, framed into the riot of his lovely blooms. Softly came the answer to the question that trembled on my lips.

"The great ones of the earth can build spiritual hovels, but the labourer can rear a palace for his soul."

The film that all my life had obscured my sight suddenly rolled back. All those garments of satisfaction and self-esteem that had for years enveloped me were clean stripped away. In one terrible instant I saw myself naked and utterly revealed. What man, seeing this, shall not tremble?

I knelt, abased in supplication. I gazed, but my eyes faltered before the essence suddenly

radiating from the transfigured Presence. The mortal in me recoiled from this embodiment of immortality. The glory and the dream had visited me.

Thus, for a long time, sightless and silent, till a breath of fragrance reached me and a delicate wind kissed my trembling lids.

In fear and wonderment I looked again and saw —the soft undulations of the flower-strewn plain, stretching to the sea. The long rift, the black tarn, that ancient house, the dust and desolation— all had vanished.

Slowly, almost unconsciously, my steps were retraced, like those of a man "moving about in worlds half realized." I was still suspended somewhere between this solid infrangible earth and one more tenuous, more elusive, and yet not less real; and it was the gardener who greeted me as he leaned lovingly over his roses.

"They're wunnerful, maister, they're wunnerful," he said, with a pink bud lying like a fairy shell in the cup of his wrinkled hand. "An' ye know, maister, summat tells me they're even more than that."

I caught the quiet sunshine of his mild blue eye, the eye of a Spirit that had never wandered far from home. "Yes," I muttered, staring at him with a sudden, strange, breathless interest, "I think they're more than that."

THE TRAINING OF CHILIQUI

As of old the red man's child
Learns the language of the wild,
And the unwritten laws prevail
When the hunter strikes the trail:
"Silent come and silent go;
Leave no coal of fire to glow;
Kill no more than ye may eat;
Follow close a stranger's feet;
By the gray goose read the weather;
Wisdom lies neath fur and feather;
Long trails end where they begin;
Hunger knows not kith or kin;
All but speech is understood
By the shy things of the wood."

THE TRAINING OF CHILIQUI

GREAT SLAVE LAKE swings an enormous arm a hundred miles into the North-west, and Fort Rae lies on its northerly side just about half way up.

Fifty miles from Fort Rae lived Kee-cow-ray, the Frozen-foot, War-choola, the Sunbeam, his wife, and Chiliqui, the Little Man; Dogribs all. There had also been Kee-ocho, the Big Dog. The manner of his going will be told anon.

Chiliqui had rolled happily through a naked childhood, till, in his twelfth year, little lumps of muscle began to swell on his arms and shoulders. Then he put away childish things and in the evenings sat silent, listening to his parents and watching them with wise black eyes.

Musk oxen made the first great impression. Kee-cow-ray, with a band of hunters, had crossed the big lake and tramped up the Yellow Knife river and struck east into the musk ox country

that lies north of Lake Mackay. This is the Land of Little Sticks that fringes the borders of the barrens. Here the spruce and birch and jack pine dwindle to a ragged edge, and thrust straggling out-posts of small timber into the naked country that marches unbroken to the Arctic.

Things had gone well with Kee-cow-ray that trip, and Chiliqui's eyes glittered as he heard. They were very intimate things that Kee-cow-ray spoke of—one would have thought that he himself was a musk ox endowed with speech as he told of their food—the white moss of the barren lands, of their migration to winter shelter and the patrol of the bulls around the cows and calves.

Chiliqui's heart was thumping with a new-born lust to kill. "More, my father, tell me more!"

"They are very wise," went on Kee-cow-ray. "They go to the woods in winter because the snow is soft, and they can reach their food. Also when snow comes the calf is very young."

"And then?"

"The cow takes it to a deep valley, and as the snow deepens it lies still till, bye-and-bye, it is covered in a little teepee of its own."

"And dies of hunger?"

"Kahween, not so," said Kee-cow-ray, smiling. "There is a hole in the teepee and the calf puts its head out to draw milk from its mother."

Chiliqui stared hard at him, but knew truth when he heard it, and his father went on to tell him more. How sickness takes the oxen from flies snuffed into their throats when feeding, and from wasps that burrow beneath their hair to lay eggs: how their tracks are all in line because their legs are too short to trot and the breast hair is so long that they step on it when grazing. At the last, being outcast from the herd by reason of bad temper or old age, they follow till the big gray coast wolves pull them down. "It was a good hunt," concluded Kee-cow-ray, and then pulled hard at his pipe and looked thoughtfully at his son.

War-choola cut into the glance and caught her husband's eyes. "Is it not time?" she said slowly.

Kee-cow-ray nodded. "Yes. It is time. Wabun—to-morrow."

Chiliqui wiggled out of his blanket next morning

and found the fire alight. This was strange, for the lighting of that fire had been his special duty ever since he could remember. Beside it sat War-choola with misty eyes, and beside War-choola lay things that he had regarded for months with breathless anticipation.

His mother put her arms around him. "My son will soon be a man, the little son I carried so long on my back." Then she kissed him many times and dressed him in a new caribou suit, young skins with the hide cured to a soft leather. On his feet she wound great blanket socks and folded his sleeping robe around his shoulders. Then there was a beautiful new hand axe and a light skinning knife, and a tea kettle, and a tump line of shagganappi, which is rawhide. Last of all a fire-bag with flint and steel and punkwood, and, most wonderful of all, a miniature pipe, the bowl made of the dew claw of a bear, the stem being the long wing bone of a crane. Then over his head she put the capote or hunting cap, and, as the light at the door darkened, Chiliqui, garbed as a hunter, looked up to see Kee-cow-ray smiling at him. Something moved in the boy that he

could not understand, but the gates of a new world opened.

Three hours later he was swinging along through the deep snow ten feet behind his father. The big man left but a poor trail to follow. It fell in on his shoes till insteps and calves were cords of pain from lifting them. Then came big timber, where the wind had not penetrated, and every tree, branch and twig, every stump and log was crowned with fantastic mounds and minarets of snow. It lay deep and undulating, a thick crystalline fleece imprinted everywhere by the life of the forest.

To Chiliqui the silence was portentous. It closed in and followed him all day, throbbing with all the mysteries to be solved before he became a hunter. At night he gathered dry wood because it was smokeless and without smell of burning, and watched Kee-cow-ray build the fire from the twinkle of flame his son had kindled.

An Arctic owl winnowed noiselessly through the gloom, and the lad lay on his side while his father told him more than he had ever dreamed

about owls. How the three round eggs are laid in early spring and the young birds are thrust out on to the snow to do for themselves, and why the mother owl does the hunting. He had never understood that before, but it was very natural after all, because she plucked her own breast to line the nest and her cold skin would never hatch eggs—of course not. So the royal disdainful father sat warmly on the eggs while his bare-fleshed wife killed rabbits and ptarmigan, and husky mice and lemming, and fed her lord till the day appointed for his release. And just as Kee-cow-ray was explaining why the owls stole each other's eggs, and the reason for the under feathers of birds being darker than those on top, while the under fur of all animals is the lighter, his voice died out of Chiliqui's ears and the boy's eyes closed.

All next day he stayed close in camp while his father followed fresh moose tracks. In the evening, in that half light that slips in between day time and night, when animals wake up and white and brown men get drowsy, a rifle spoke over the hills, once, and again once. At this

Chiliqui became very busy packing up, because it is easier to move camp to a moose than to drag the great beast for miles through the underbrush to a camp that you can put on your shoulders in ten minutes and carry for eight hours of daylight. Then he waited in the silence till someone laughed behind him, and he turned to see Kee-cow-ray knocking the icicles off his short beard before he lighted his pipe.

When it was all over, the new camp made—the moose skinned and his huge head and horns hoisted into a birch tree to propitiate the spirits of all the moose—when Chiliqui rested, blood-stained as to his fingers and new caribou tunic, Kee-cow-ray thrust a hard finger into the red bowl of his pipe and spoke. A new companionship had arisen between them, one that would last to the end. It was the bond of trail and camp, of fire and danger and blood, the old primal bond that first held men and tribes together. Kee-cow-ray knew it and his quiet mind sped back to one just such another night, when another son had smiled happily at him across just such another fire. Now his eyes rested on Chiliqui, caught

the strength in the lad's lithe form, the play of young blood beneath his smooth skin, and met the steady gaze that searched his own. "It is of Kee-ocho I would speak," he said slowly.

Again a great white owl began to winnow beneath the trees and a fantastic crown of snow tumbled soundless from a branch beside them. Chiliqui's glance never wavered. "Tell me of my brother," he said.

Kee-cow-ray's face, seamed with the rigour of northern winters, fixed itself into a leathern mask. "It is ten summers ago that I took your brother to hunt, even as I take you, little son."

There was that in his voice that mingled with the puttering of the fire and the almost imperceptible whisper of wind loitering through the tree tops, for nature fashions to herself the words of those who follow and understand. "Behind the camp we found two lakes that touched, and where they touched was a dam built by many beavers."

An unspoken question jumped at him across the fire. "The dam was high," he replied, "and the beaver roads were deep and there were many

different tooth marks. I told Kee-ocho to wait there while I went to the end of the lake where the beavers were working."

Chiliqui shivered a little in spite of himself. This brother of whom he had thought so much and heard so little was coming very close now.

"At the end of the lake I killed, and on the way back I stopped to smoke, perhaps one hour, perhaps two. It was cloudy, but sometimes I could see Tibikuk Gheezis, the moon. Then as I smoked I heard a sound in the grass. It came very slowly and carefully, and because it was near the ground I said 'it is Muqua, the bear who walks by night,' for I could hear the weight of him pressing down on his feet. Tibikuk Gheezis looked from behind a cloud, and I saw Muqua's head above the grass. Then I fired very quickly."

Chiliqui leaned forward, tense with the horror that seared his father's eyes, but the voice held indomitably on. "I could hear him rolling and breaking small brush, and then when it was quiet I went to see—and saw—your brother Kee-ocho."

There was a quavering lift in Kee-cow-ray's

tone, so insistent was it that Chiliqui sat and trembled. "He was quite dead. I shot him in the throat. He had heard me coming, and because I stopped he thought I was a bear. I spoke to the Great Spirit, but He did not answer, so I knew what I must do having killed my son. I loaded my rifle and took off my moccasin and lay down beside him. I told him that I was very sad and asked him to forgive me and said that he should not go alone. Then I kissed Kee-ocho and placed my arm round his neck with the gun at my own throat and pressed the trigger with my toe."

His voice failed. The eternal mystery of the forest closed in on them, father and son. The fire tumbled into red destruction, the white owl winged nearer and nearer, a myriad tiny sounds of the myriad small lives that people the winter fastnesses became suddenly audible, but the two fur-clad figures moved not. Then Kee-cow-ray found speech. "The hammer fell, but the rifle did not speak. I tried again and once more it failed. So I got up and put my finger across the muzzle, and the third time it spoke. So I knew

what the Spirit meant by not answering. I was not to kill myself."

Chiliqui's eyes wandered to where the stump of the little finger marred his father's left hand. He had regarded that stump with curiosity for years. Now he knew why his mother always put the question by, and, reading the boy's thoughts, Kee-chow-ray continued doggedly:

"I took Kee-ocho in my arms and carried him home, and that I might not kill your mother also while you were at her breast, I called loudly 'I am Kee-cow-ray the hunter, who has killed his son,' and when War-choola heard me she thought I was mad—and that was better than nothing."

Again his voice sank, and Chiliqui, gazing at him speechless, knew that this was something not for him, but he did the one and only thing he could do and kissed his father on both cheeks and slipped into his blanket, leaving the still figure staring with unseeing eyes into the ashes of the fire.

Now the tale of that winter can be told you by any lad, be he Dogrib or Cree or Yellow Knife

or Saulteau; for all through the north country from Hudson's Bay to the foothills, from Lake Winnipeg up through the barren lands, the tale is the same. It is the old story of the training of men. Beside the camp fire the history of the hunt is unfolded to young eyes and brains, the intimate history of the matching of the red-man against his ancient prey.

Chiliqui learned to walk silently and to mark everything. He learned the signs and tracks, to obey implicitly, and then for the first time he killed. Next winter he hunted again with his father, but this time he walked ahead, a noiseless copper-coloured slip of youth, animated by all the inherited skill of his ancestors. And because the lad's soul was brave and his eye quick and his finger steady, he became a hunter before the beard sprouted on his chin.

When single-handed he killed first, it was a timber wolf that fell, a gaunt grey apparition, maddened with hunger, that died in mid-air while he was launched at the lad's face. He dropped, and kicked and stiffened, the black gums lifting slowly from his long fangs, his jaws locking in the

last defiant grin of death. The boy looked at him, soberly—he knew what he must do—and what was to follow that. So he stripped off the long matted hide and wrapped the red heart in it and the skull he placed as every hunter places it.

That evening War-choola looked at him standing in the tent door, very tall, very slight, the brown face smiling triumphantly, and a pang went through her for no more should she call him "little son."

And while he told his story, modestly as a hunter should, his mother laid aside the skin of the wolf's head with its smooth nose-hair, and long cleft jaws and triangular ears, to make a capote for her son.

Then the girls of the camp came in laughing, and Chiliqui bared his right arm. When the arm had been rubbed with grease the prettiest of them all scored it with a fish bone and needle. All the time Chiliqui moved not nor spoke, keeping his eyes on his father, then when the arm was tied with rags, he rose—a man at last—and a member of his tribe.

And of all who laughed and feasted, who could have guessed that Chiliqui was fated to wander over half a continent and die a famous chief, where Ponce-coupé's plains look across at the hills of the Peace River?

THE LAST PATROL

From Bermondsey and Brighton,
From Auckland and the Forth,
From all the seas are gathered in
The wardens of the North ;
Whose empty spaces bind them
That they return no more,
To all they left behind them
And all they lived before.

And some would fain remember,
And some would fain forget,
That down the hollow Kentish lanes
The wild rose lingers yet ;
That 'cross the moor and through the glen
The infant rivers run ;—
The days were long in Scotland then,
But here—the midnight sun ;

And here the great auroras swing
Like curtains in the sky,
The wild swan lifts his trumpeting,
The grey goose hurtles by ;
For half the year the naked land
Is sheathed in rigid mail ;
Brothers ! God wot, ye understand
Who tramp the Dawson trail.

THE LAST PATROL

FITZGERALD'S patrol was due in Dawson on February the 1st. After three weeks of storm and cold, the Indian Esau arrived, saying that he had left Fitzgerald on January the 1st, at Mountain Creek, twenty days' easy travelling from Dawson.

Thereupon Synder, commanding B division on the Yukon, thought hard, and telegraphed to Perry, Commissioner at Regina, *via* Eagle, Valdez, and wireless.

Perry's answer halted, for the wires went down under the weight of winter winds. But, when it did arrive, Dempster's patrol pulled out for Fort McPherson on the very same day. With him were Constable Fyfe, ex-Constable Turner, Indian Charles Stewart, and three teams of five dogs each.

Three weeks later, Dempster, having tramped four hundred and fifty miles, was swinging down

the Peel River. His eyes, roving restlessly, picked up an old snowshoe trail. Turning sharply, he followed it up the steep bank and pushed his way into a clump of ground willows. There he stopped, stared hard and long, and stooped over something that broke the smooth curves of drifting snow.

From Fort McPherson south-west to Dawson as the crow flies is three hundred and fifty miles. As man walks it is five hundred. As water runs it is a good deal more. Inspector Fitzgerald told Corporal Somers that it was just about thirty-five days, and, as you will see, Somers had reason to remember that just three months later.

Fitzgerald's orders were very brief. He was to patrol to Dawson in the winter of 1910-11. Thus wrote the Commissioner in Regina to the Comptroller in Ottawa, the summer before. There was nothing unusual about it. The Mounted Police were threading the wilderness everywhere.

So Fitzgerald gathered in Constables Kinney and Taylor, and Special Constable Carter, who had made the trip once, from the other end, four

years before. Also he requisitioned, to be exact, twelve hundred and fifty-six pounds of supplies. These included nine hundred pounds of fish for the fifteen train-dogs. In other words, he allowed two and one-quarter pounds of food per man per day, which is less than the subarctic standard ration. It was to be a record patrol. Every pound of weight was a handicap.

Now, the recognized route is up the Peel a hundred miles, across the big bend eighty more, hit the Peel again, then turn up through the Big Wind into the Little Wind River, till you strike Forrest Creek. This takes you by way of Mountain Creek to the gaunt backbone of the big divide. Here the waters on your left hand flow into Bering Sea and on your right into the Arctic. Once over the big divide you strike Wolf Creek, then down hill, across the glaciers, the Little Hart River and Christmas Creek and the Blackstone. These are Yukon waters. All of this sounds geographic. In winter-time, in the North, it is something more, for here geography is vital and insistent.

On December the 21st, which was a Wednesday,

a pygmy caravan swung out on the broad expanse of the Peel. Three men, three dog teams, one man—that was the order of going. The wind was strong and the cold was bitter. Fifty-one below on the tenth day—you have the figures in Fitzgerald's diary for it. Half-way over the eighty-mile portage is Caribou Born Mountain. Eighteen hundred feet above the stark wilderness it shoulders, mantled with great drifts, plastered with ice, searched and harried by every wind that lifts across these speechless wastes. The trail clings to its bleak flanks; and over the trail toiled Fitzgerald's patrol.

What shall be said of the trail to you who know it not? The air is tense and sharp, it almost rings. The nights are luminous with ghostly fires that palpitate through the sparkling zenith. The days are full of aching, destroying, indomitable effort, when the body summons all its powers to live under the weight of arctic frosts. And through the body run the pain and torture of burning sinews and scorched sight, till the innermost essence of courage and fortitude and contempt of death rise up to laugh out in these

silences. Here the soul of a man shouts aloud, for life is terrible and fierce.

On January the 8th, on Little Wind River, it was sixty-four below, with a strong head wind. A day or two before the temperature was the same, and Fitzgerald records some slight frost-bites. What eloquence of brevity!

Then began the search for Forrest Creek, that led to the big divide. It will be remembered that Carter had come from Dawson once, but he had come north. There was a vast difference. In between times he had been roaming the subarctics, and, with the exception of a few gaunt landmarks, the great ridges and plains of the Yukon district are like brothers all. There was also the map that Darrel drew the summer before. But Darrel was on his way in a canoe from La Pierre House, near the Alaskan frontier, to the Red River, south of Winnipeg. This was a matter of some three thousand miles. So he was in a hurry and did not spend much time when he stopped at the Fort, and Fitzgerald was not there to see him draw it and ask questions.

A few days later the inspector pulled up. The Dawson trail was lost. The tributaries of the Little Wind River, among which somewhere lay Forrest Creek, had yielded no clue. Precious days were spent in which dauntless humanity had braved the double rigour of cold and a gradually increasing hunger. In these latitudes the body cries out for food. Its demand is primordial and relentless, and what the body receives it almost instantly transmutes into strength and bodily warmth, into an inward glow to fortify it against the death that otherwise is sure. In the north, to be hungry is to be cold, and to be cold is to invite the end.

All of this Fitzgerald knew, and yet, when his lean brigade faced backward on the trail, there was left of the provisions only ten pounds of bacon, eight pounds of flour, and some dried fish, the latter for the dogs. The delay was the price of his contempt for hardship and danger. But you must know that hunger and cold were no strangers to the police. They met and grappled yearly, with no quarter asked.

On the seventeenth of January began the

retreat of beaten men. Who shall say what thoughts animated them, moving like specks, infinitesimally small, over a blank and measureless expanse? With nightfall came the first tragedy. The first-train dog was killed.

Now the dog of the North is cousin to the wolf and kindred to the fox. He is very wise and his teeth are very sharp. But here, more than in all the world, he is the friend and servant of man. By the trail you will know him, when his shoulders jam tight into the collar and his tawny sides break into ripples with the play of tireless muscles underneath. Man may at times kill man, but not, save in the last extremity, may man kill dog.

Fitzgerald's axe fell. There was a quick twitching of sinews and a snarling from the fourteen comrades of the trace. Then something older than man himself rose in them and they drew back from the gory fragments of their brother. Their bellies were empty, their eyes glanced shiftily and winking at their masters. Insensate hunger was assailing their entrails, but dog would not eat dog.

Thus continued the agonizing march. Their bodies, lacking natural food, began slowly to capitulate their outposts to the frost. Grey patches appeared on faces and arms and there was no rush of warm blood to repel the invader. Day by day with dwindling strength these indomitable souls fought on, giving of themselves to the fight, but day by day having less to give. That is the great drama of the North. It demands, it seizes, it usurps; but, for itself, it does nothing but wait. It closes in little by little, by day and night, always waiting and always taking, till, after a little moment of its eternal silence, it has taken everything.

By February the 5th many things had happened. The dauntless four had travelled about two hundred miles on dog-meat. The river ice was weighted down with its burden of snow, and both Carter and Taylor had plunged through into numbing waters while the temperature was fifty-six below. The human organism shrank from its savage portion of canine flesh. The skin began to split and peel and blacken. The tissues of their bodies shrank and contracted

closer and closer round hearts that still beat defiantly. Feet and hands began to freeze, and ominous grey patches mottled their high cheek-bones that stood out sharply from hollow faces.

When and where Taylor and Kinney dropped behind is the secret of the North. But soon after the fifth a morning came when they did not break camp with the others, and the fort was only thirty-five miles away. The parting must have been brief. Then, in the grey of the arctic morning, Fitzgerald and Carter summoned their last reserves of failing strength and staggered on for help.

The day waxed and waned in the little camp and all around closed in the stark and stinging wilderness. Food there was none. By now the organs of the body, lacking sustenance, had turned upon each other to destroy. Hunger had changed from a dull pain to a fierce gnawing and snatching at the vitals. With cracked fingers they chopped at a moose hide and boiled the fragments. But their stomachs, which receded to the backbone, refused to harbour it.

So beneath the Alaska robes they lay and waited.

Taylor spoke. There came no answer. He looked into Kinney's face. It stared up blankly and the hardening body did not yield to his touch. The comrade of the trail had changed places with Death—with a new bedfellow from whose chill embraces he struggled weakly to escape.

Strange visions came into his mind: thoughts of running water and warm weather and bronzed men sitting round big camp-fires telling stories of patrols. And the most interesting of all was about the Dawson patrol that broke the record from Fort McPherson under Fitzgerald. Just as he was getting a light from the next man, his elbow touched something, and, turning, he saw a corpse that looked like Kinney. He thrust out a hand and it encountered something cold. So his eyes travelled slowly till they saw Kinney's face, and it was grey with frost. The fire went out. The men stopped talking. All at once he heard something coming through the underbrush. It was strangely difficult to move, for he was still very sleepy, but he did manage to get hold of his

carbine. Then something lurched toward him, lumbering and dreadful, and he pointed the carbine straight at its crimson, dripping mouth, and crooked his finger.

A shot rang out, sudden and sharp. It rolled from the little camp, through the scant timber fringing the river-bank, up into the motionless atmosphere and toward the diamond-pointed stars. There was no one left to hear it. But Christ is wise and merciful, and He understood how it was that Taylor lay with the top of his head blown off, beside his comrade of the trail.

The price was not yet paid; the North demanded full tribute. Ten miles nearer home, twenty-five miles from the cheer and warmth of Fort McPherson, it was paid in full. Ex-Constable Carter lay on his back, with folded hands and a handkerchief over his face. Beside him crouched Fitzgerald, battling for life. His stiffening fingers wrote laboriously with a charred stick on a scrap of paper. His stricken eyes moved from it to the still figure, then back to his writing. "All money in despatch-bag and bank, clothes, etc., I leave to my beloved mother." It

was all very clear and plain. Then, as the ultimate distress seized him, he added, "God bless all."

He was now conscious that it was left for him to balance the account. The physical struggle was ended. There remained only the mental anguish. So Fitzgerald must have summoned to his aid all the heroic traditions, all the magnificent discipline of the service. He faced the end like a soldier and an officer, without rancour, fear, or complaint. He gave himself, all of himself, to that baptism of mortality with which the vast spaces of this silent country are being redeemed.

Winds blew. Snow fell. The hollow caverns of the North emptied themselves of storm and blizzard. And after weeks of silence came Dempster.

He had searched Forrest Creek, but found no sign. Little Wind River did not speak of the vanished brigade. The Big Wind had no word of them save deserted camps and the black hearts of dead fires. Caribou Born Mountain held its peace, for they were not there, but the sign came when the Peel began to broaden to the Arctic.

First, a despatch-bag in Old Colin's lonely cabin; then a tent and a stove; then dog-harness from which had been cut all hair and hide that might retain anything of nourishment. Thus grew the tokens that tightened the cords round Dempster's breast and chilled the hot blood pumping through his heart.

And, at the end of it all, two rigid forms beneath their sleeping-bags. The face of one blue and blotched, painted with all the fearful colouring of frozen death. The other no longer the face of a man.

A few miles further on, their brothers of the trail, the hands of one crossed, his eyes decently closed and covered. Beside him the lost leader, the last to die.

Race now with Dempster to Fort McPherson, only twenty-five miles away. Call Corporal Somers and make with him the last short journey that brought Fitzgerald's patrol back home again. Stand and watch the three Indians dig a great grave in the iron earth. Listen to Whittaker, English Church missionary, speaking trembling words over the four rough coffins. Guard your

ears while the red flames leap and the echoes crash from the rifles of the firing party. And, when you have done all this, do one thing more: Remember that while the wilderness endures there will also endure those to whom its terrors are but an invitation; those who will meet its last demands with the calm cognizance that mocks at danger.

Brothers of the pack-strap and the saddle—well-tried comrades of the trail—sojourners in silent places—honour to the Service and to you all!

PLUS AND MINUS

When you grumble at the narrowness of fate
And itch to do the things you never do,
When you pine for other pleasures, long to dance to other measures
'Mid conditions periodically blue,
This one important axiom understand,
It's the only blessed thing to pull you through—
Tho' from dust you were created, for your job a man was slated
And the fellow is most generally—you.

PLUS AND MINUS

It was at the close of a dreary winter day that three men sat in front of a great fire-place in a well-known city club—three men whose distinctive personalities were revealed by the yellow light of leaping flame. Around them was the subdued atmosphere which men of affairs look for and appreciate in their social haven, an array of deep yawning leather chairs and broad flat tables littered with periodicals, an expanse of sober-coloured carpet into which the foot sank noiselessly. Their talk had drifted unconsciously from the topics of the day to what might be termed individualities—they were expressing not so much their opinions as themselves, and—old cronies all—each offering to friendly vivisection was made in sincerity and received with courteous respect.

Penrose, the artist, a tall, slight, delicate man, was speaking, slowly and thoughtfully. "It is curious," said he, "how very few things do really

interest and hold us; we live in such a kaleidoscope that our attention is continually diverted to some new phase—colour scheme—to speak professionally, and as our minds grow agile in movement they seem to lose retention. Perhaps it's our interpretation of things that is at fault. Personally, I am deeply conscious of loss in this respect."

The others did not speak at once; they were wondering how Penrose could complain of a deadened sensibility—Penrose, who had mixed into his paints such a quintessence of delicate feeling and perception that his work was prized above that of any modern artist.

At last Stevenson, the iron-master, broke in: "My dear fellow, if Hulett or myself had entered that complaint there would be reason in it; but you—you see things that we are blind to and cannot realize till we get the chance of buying your paintings, and that doesn't come any too often."

"Perhaps I will be more clear if I put it another way. There are things which one may think are not worth the effort to obtain; some other one makes the effort and does obtain.

Now, although we still question the value of that particular thing to ourselves, we begin to be just a trifle disgruntled, because some one else has decided otherwise, and acted upon that decision."

"Heavens, Penrose," put in Hulett, "that sounds remarkably commercial to come from such an untainted source as yourself!"

The others both laughed, and Hulett continued: "What do you feel the need of? You've got the world to paint, and the world wants you to paint it. Stevenson makes steel rails and is haunted by tariff reform, and I manufacture cloth and fight the labour unions. You don't want to change places with us, do you?"

"No, I don't. I suppose it's all due to that unrest which some good-natured poet has called divine, but honestly I am impressed by what you men are doing. You feed thousands; you create wealth; you strengthen the nation—and, curiously enough, my keenest impression is not about my own work, but Stevenson's."

The latter turned in his seat and looked at Penrose: "What is it, old man?"

"It's the trip I took with you two years ago.

It seems to grow more vivid every day; I have forgotten much, but never that!"

Inquisitive to see the picture of his own work in the artist's mind, Stevenson said: "Tell us, just as you see it now."

The slight figure in the big chair began to speak very quietly.

"I went on board a steel ship, one-eighth of a mile long, and took possession of as perfect a cabin as I ever had on the Cunard. I was borne across a great inland ocean to a place where another ocean plunges into it, was lifted up, and in twelve hours had gone another two hundred miles."

Stevenson chuckled—"We had her wide open for his benefit, Hulett," but Penrose continued:

"Then I came to great caverns that went down into the very bowels of Mother Earth. Here a regiment of huge machines were tearing and gnawing at mountains of iron ore, and dropping it by the ton into steel cars. The cars were hurried away to the water's edge, and were seized by some kind of mechanical monster, and their contents literally upset into gaping pockets. The

pockets emptied themselves into the steamers that lay beside them, at the rate of ten thousand tons in six hours. Across the water they swept to long docks where machines with titan arms and hands plunged them into the holds of the ships, scooped out the ore and flung it into other cars. These bore the ore to other artificial mountains, from which the furnaces were fed with fuel and stone and iron. Night and day they roared and vomited molten metal, out of which the dross was blown by a cyclonic blast. Then came the rolls — monumental, resistless, inflexible — they received the steel billets, crushing, flattening, shaping, till out of heat and toil and power came the steel rails, miles and miles of them, as I watched. All this without the touch of a human hand. Now that is something I can never forget, and I see it all more vividly than the greatest canvas of the greatest painter — and yet I call myself an artist," he added, half contemptuously.

Stevenson's gray eyes were riveted on the speaker. It was all true—just as Penrose had told it. It was his work—good work—and he knew it; and yet he had never looked on it in

this way; he had been too much a part of the picture himself to appreciate its magnificent proportions. A curious idea came into his mind, and, anxious to prove it, he turned to Hulett.

"Impressions are in order, Hulett, tell us yours—the impression above all others."

The latter sat gazing studiously into the red coals. "Well," he said at length, "oddly enough, my memory goes back thirty years. I had just left Yale, and was having a fling before shouldering my burdens, and had drifted up into Canada, moose shooting. We, the guide and I, had been out all day, and when night came were miles from camp; it had been a hard day, too, on snow-shoes, and I was about all in. Dark found us on top of a ridge looking down into a spruce-covered hollow; pretty inhospitable, I thought, till the guide raised his hand and pointed.

"'Look,' he said—'Smoke——'

"Smoke, sure enough, it was, a thin wreath of it curling over the tree tops. We dived down the slopes and in a few minutes found the camp. It was a Hudson Bay trapper's—a big tepee made of skins and bark—about twenty feet in diameter,

and pointed like a Pierrot's hat. We lifted the flap and looked in. The trapper, a fine old chap, was mending snares, and his wife and daughter—the latter a perfect beauty—were sitting on rabbit-skin rugs and making snow-shoes. The place was spotless and a fire crackled in the middle of it all—I tell you I never saw anything so inviting in my life."

"Youth, youth, ever blessed youth," murmured Stevenson, but Hulett raised an insistent hand and went on:

"There was mighty little there, and I knew it, but what there was, was complete. There lay the beauty of it. The old fellow welcomed us with the manner of an aristocrat—asked not a single question, except were we hungry. The women got kettles and things, and he went outside, dug in the snow, and brought in some partridge and rabbits and fish, and put them all in the pot together; then they made dough-boys—delectable balls of flour and grease—and put those in. They had tea, and made that, and, when all was ready, waited on us with a grave solicitude that I have only seen equalled in the chief steward of this

club. When we had finished, they gave us robes to sleep in, and as I rolled over, I noticed that the old woman had already started to mend my socks.

"It seemed only a few moments till I woke, but it was morning; our breakfast was ready, and it was as good as our supper. When I was leaving, I noticed a red sandstone pipe the old boy had been smoking, and offered to buy it. He took it out of his mouth and said: 'It is yours.'

"And now listen. He put us on our trail, and when I insisted on his taking money, he simply drew himself up like the gorgeous old pagan he was, and said:

"'No, no—you would have done the same for me,' and was off like a shot.

"Now, gentlemen, would I?—That's the question I have been asking myself periodically ever since. His interpretation puts mine to shame nine times out of ten. He had nothing, but he gave much, and gave it with grace and modest confidence, looking for nothing. He had the largeness of heart which the competition in our lives is choking to death. I tell you that terrapin and pommery have not killed the savour of that stew,

and I don't intend that they ever shall. Stevenson suggests 'youth.' I am with him to a point, but that old fellow had youth and sweetness of spirit while we seem to be getting dried up before our time. Well, you have it, and I expect it's hardly the kind of impression you were anticipating—eh, Stevenson?"

The ironmaster had just lit a cigar and was intently watching the dwindling end of a match. "Well, I don't exactly know," he answered; "I almost did expect something like that, although my knowledge of your tastes does not associate you with stews and dough-boys. I have some kind of an elemental idea in my head that we are all more or less pagans, or would like to be sometimes—just periodically. We profit by our civilization, of course, hugely, but there are some primitive joys we miss on account of it. We are apt to get so infernally refined that we become unnatural. Do you remember Bishop Blougram in Browning, how he

> 'Rolled him out a mind
> Long crumpled, till creased consciousness lay smooth.'

That's what most of us need—to get the wrinkles

out of mental compositions. I did once, completely and absolutely—it's my one great impression.

"After the Steel Trust took over our plant, I went abroad. It had been heavy work; you know, perhaps, that our people were the biggest independents outside the Carnegie lot, and when the smoke had cleared away and papers were signed, I went over and stayed in Algiers. I wanted to get away from everything and everybody, so moved on east till I came to a little town called Kroubs, a white-washed patch not far from the edge of the Sahara. The people were practically all natives, Moors, Nubians, and Arabs, with perhaps half a dozen French.

"All that part of Africa was under French military rule—it was a grazing country—and Kroubs was really the headquarters of the business for the province. I stayed in a small Arab hotel fronting the main street, and lived on coffee, dates, eggs, and black bread, and spent most of the time picking up languages and poking my nose into other people's business. One morning I got up early and sat at the window before sunrise.

The sky had been purple all night and was just showing a little pink, and across the road was a big sheep-pen, with high stone walls around it and a heavy, narrow wooden gate. I could look right into it, and see hundreds of sheep packed like sardines in a case, and presently an Arab chief came up, all dressed in white, with a couple of Nubians behind him. The two were like ebony statues, big, tall, and beautifully built; all they wore was a loin cloth, and they carried gourds for water bottles. I noticed the chief had a big iron key hanging from his girdle, and with this opened the gates. You could hear the old wrought-iron hinges creak a mile away in the stillness, and the Nubians stood one on each side as the sheep came out. There was just room for one at a time, and, as I live, the Nubians had a name for each sheep, and they knew it as they were called, and turned right or left, one after the other. Now, mind you, there was not a sound, except the shuffle of their trotters and the queer words these big black men were saying in a curious, guttural chuckle of a voice, and yet the sheep knew their shepherd.

"Pretty soon the yard was empty—that white-clad Arab relocked the gate, and his flocks stood waiting behind the Nubians. Then they turned off into the plains—long, low ridges, just like ground swells covered with short grass. The Arab disappeared, and I watched the others, one going south and the other east. They dwindled as they went, those black pillars with their white patches following after, until they dropped out of sight behind a lift of the desert. I rubbed my eyes and stared. It seemed, somehow, that a corner of a curtain had been thrown back and I had had a glimpse into days when Abraham's herdsmen watched their sheep. It seemed as if those same Nubians had been guarding those same flocks in just that way every day since the world was young, and all the time I kept saying to myself: 'The sheep knew their shepherd.' Now, that was the most impressive thing I ever saw."

There was a long silence around the fireplace as Stevenson finished. Something of the mystery and beauty of the scene was in the minds of the three and they were loath to part with it, when a

door opened and two men entered—one of them was speaking rapidly.

"The whole thing might have been avoided with a fractional loss. It was pure carelessness—alarm system out of order—engines did not arrive till too late. It was a mistake in wiring; got their positives and negatives confused, and there was no current."

Stevenson smiled contentedly across the hearth at the others. "That's it—that's what I was after—for electricity substitute life; we don't know what it is, but we can produce it; and it has, in every case, these elements, apparently conflicting, but, as a matter of fact, absolutely necessary for the performance of work. Otherwise you get a dead wire. If we happen to be positives, we must have our negatives—somewhere, somehow. And in our own cases there seems to be no doubt about it."

"The artist and the blast furnace," put in Hulett.

"The ironmaster and the sheep," chuckled Penrose.

"The manufacturer and the dough-boys," concluded Stevenson.

THE CYCLE OF THE NORTH

A murmur through the barrens—"Comes now the change of year,"
And fur and feather, hair and hide, are very wise to hear.

THE CYCLE OF THE NORTH

The timber fails just beyond the 59th parallel. First the delicate white birch dwindles, then the smooth bark poplar before his rougher brother, then the spruce vanishes, till, beside the river beds that tempestuous waters have cut deep below the plains, there is only a fringe of tamarack and willow and dwarf pine.

Spring moves at first gently across these solitudes. There is a strange period in April, when the stark rigour of winter is alleviated by soft hollows in the north winds. There are pauses and cessations, intermittent and slowly more constant, and then the winds swing suddenly from east and south. Instantly there is a divine change. On sunward slopes the snow is sucked up into these gentle airs, and May floats up from warmer latitudes across leagues of wild heather and caribou moss.

Then the sturdy growths spring into life. The

anemone spreads in great stunted patches of lilac bloom. The snow forget-me-not thrusts through the shreds of winter's disappearing blanket, white as that winter itself, and wild croci flaunt yellow blossoms streaked with fiery red. On low land the tulip is star scattered in deep moss, red also like fire, and the dwarf saskatoons prepare for their profusion of hardy pears.

But ere the blossoms come the population of the barren lands grows with the lengthening days. First the eagles in royal austerity, beating north to breed on the islands of the Arctic. Then dancing clouds of grey-white snow-birds, vociferous rooks and swift wedges of great Canada geese, flanked with drifting flocks of ducks. All these are hardy birds, equipped for the broken weather that yet must come. In the weeks that follow there is a quick procession, a general immigration of smaller geese and ducks, of cranes, woodpeckers and plover, and last of all the swans, incredibly high and marvellously swift, whipping the air with huge wings, whose tip feathers are worn and broken in the long passage from Florida and the Carribean, and the remoteness of South America.

On land there is movement and life. Vast herds of caribou does ripple steadily north to bear their young, secure because nature has robbed their hooves of scent, and the grey wolves, the enemies of their race, cannot thereby track them. Along the steep shores of Hudson's Bay, the she-bear issues lean and ravenous, with the young she has borne and nourished behind a snow bank, while she fasted the winter long. The salt shores are fringed with her hungry sisters, with tall coast wolves, and white and red foxes, all seeking the dead things from the sea. Musk oxen leave the fringe of timber and graze suspiciously, snuffing flies and mosquitos and wasps into their red throats, of which many shall sicken and die.

Now come July and August when the earth is bright with roses and fruit. The yellow moon-berry swells from the centre of its four-leaved white flower. The eyeberry runs riot. Crow-berries shine like black pearls amid their star-shaped foliage. The blueberry is everywhere, with low, flat bushes and clusters of oval sweetness. The cranberry climbs on the rocks and sands.

The snakeberry nods in single perfection, poisonous on its slender stem, and kinikinic, the weed-berry, waits till some wandering redman shall pluck and dry it for the redman's tobacco.

The plains are carpeted with the profuse blossom of the wild tea, whose velvety-pointed leaf brings comfort by many a camp fire. Next the soil, the coarse, green moss thrusts out its plum-coloured bloom or spreads viewless beneath grey tufts that live upon its surface. On the rocks, splintered by the ice, black lichens stick, thick and cuplike, ere they whiten and die.

And all this time the days are getting longer and the air milder, and the stiff earth turns to slacken her rigid joints and yield the wonderful life that lives but for weeks. Now, too, may be seen the operations of those vital laws and customs that rule the wild. The bulls of the musk oxen patrol their herds in a shaggy and truculent circle, outside of which their outlaws, outlaws by age or ill temper, are pulled down by their ancient enemies. Across the flat country a swan's nest marks bay and point. Here the mother bird hatches her young, while the husband hies to the

congregation of males, meeting daily where the food is good. The conclave is that of a club, severely masculine, and the lords of many nests commune noisily together. To the club also, may come the mother, should her mate be killed, to choose another spouse; but only for this intimate and selective purpose is her approach permitted. Coastwise, range packs of white foxes, defenceless singly, but invincible together, and the grey wolves hunt the polar bear, surrounding him with a ring of snapping jaws, when the salt mud sinks under his feet at low tide.

Then, as the year fattens, comes the physical change, and fur and feather, worn, matted and broken, are put away for the new covering that grows before the autumn closes. The swans cluster in solitary places to moult, places where there are periwinkles and clams and crabs and berries for the taking. The caribou move slowly with patches of new hair spreading on their multi-coloured flanks. Everywhere there is an easing and slackening of the eternal war. Carcajou, the wolverine, is too lazy to steal, and eats dead fish, and the white bears drowse in the languid heat.

In September there is a quickening of wild blood. From lonely places the fat moulting birds begin to waddle toward the coast. There is a touch of frost at night, and all plants and fruits fling themselves out with ultimate and prodigal profusion. In the north the caribou does turn with their young and begin to trot south with the sound of a multitude of clicking hoofs and horns, for they do not shed their antlers like the bucks. Then also small tribes that neither hibernate nor eat moss, the rats and beaver and squirrels, replenish their stores.

Gradually the salt water edges become peopled with travellers preparing for that most wonderful journey in the world. Mallard, widgeon, teal, plover, geese, swans, all the broad and narrow billed brotherhood assembles. Night and day the tumult of them ascends. There is eating of sand for digestion, and digging of shellfish to harden muscles softened by the sweet things of the plains; for it is common knowledge that there will be no more sea food till they sight the swamps of the Gulf of Mexico. The air is black with trial flights of young birds trying the strength of

young pinions, coming back to earth with calls and whistles and quacking and trumpeting. Old birds, strong of wing and weatherwise, mount to invisible spaces looking for that whisper of the north they all await, till as the autumn days of Indian summer pass, the colonies grow strong and clean and confident.

And then, of a sudden, there is stillness in the air and a grey sky, and with a few white flakes the word of the mysterious north has come. A crisping of the shallow pools and the ducks climb circling into a slender wedge, with the wisest and strongest at the point of it. In two hours the shores are desolate of ducks, for they have far to travel and must start betimes. And so the marvellous procession marshalls its appointed order with the wisdom that lies behind the flat skulls and beady eyes of winged things. As they come they go. The weaker ones first who must stay and rest often by the way and brave innumerable dangers in their short journeys, till only are left the swans, whose single flight can be a thousand miles, who seek the high altitudes where the air is thin. Then, when the swans have gone, the

royal eagles throb down from the Arctic in lonely passage along deserted leagues, and when the eagles have sped there is silence on the coasts.

Little by little the ice forms. Lakes narrow. Headland joins to headland. The male white bears follow out, fishing for seals and walrus. Wood buffalo and musk oxen seek shelter in the land of little sticks, and only the coast caribou and bigger wolves brave the open. The barren ground bear hides himself in warmth and sleep and carcajou finds a deserted foxhole.

Then comes the snow, light, impalpable and fine like star dust, and behind it the first breathing of that north wind that searches the plain for months. The land tightens, shrinks and hardens. Its rugged ridges are smoothed out in soft curves that swim into each other. Day is obliterated in the half light of a sun that seems a stranger in these regions of death, till with relentless force and swiftness rises the steady drone of the wind. Winter has come to the barren lands.

THE REVENGE OF PINNÉ

This is the story of Pinné,
Told in the northern land,
When the great aurora flickers
Its marvellous violet band,
And the brown and wistful people
Hear it and understand.

In the midst of the pointed teepees
The puttering camp fires burn,
In whose coals the Saulteaux maidens
The tale of their loves discern,
And around the listening circle
Their dark eyes flash and turn.

THE REVENGE OF PINNÉ

PEDOAN was a Wood Cree and lived on the edge of the Company's ground at Fort Chippeweyan, this being by mercy of Dougall MacTavish, the factor. The latter saw him there when he came to open the Post, and, being of an easy temper, left the cabin as he found it. Nor had MacTavish reason to repent; for, when the Dogribs came up from the south and the Yellow Knives dropped in with marten from the northern rivers, it was Pedoan who did the talking for the factor, and the H. B. C. did not lose thereby.

Pinné, the Partridge, the wife of Pedoan, was old and toothless, but her brown arms were strong like steel cables, and she could set a snare with the best of trappers. There remains then their daughter Tibikuk, the Night, who moved and spoke softly, and whose dark eyes and beauty were known from the McKenzie River to James Bay.

Now it happened that a Personage, very important in the eyes of the Company, had completed a journey of exaggerated dangers and had begged that his two Saulteaux canoe men might find places as servants of the Company, and it will, of course, be understood that in the North there is only one Company. So the Commissioner nodded and dictated a letter to the factor at Fort Chippeweyan, and, as a result, Ahjeek the Otter, and Gheezis the Sun, got into a canoe on Lake Winnipeg and started north. Ahjeek was short and broad and had a bull-like neck, and when he swung a tump line over his head the sinews on his neck stood out like wire ropes and were just about as tough. Also he had a large flat nose, and a scar on his left cheek that he came by not in the paths of honesty. Gheezis, on the contrary, was thin and very supple, so that when he walked he seemed to melt into all kinds of curves as if he had no bones. His eyes were very black and quick, and one of them crossed the other so that he could look at two men at once, and neither could tell which he regarded. As to wrists and hands

he was very delicate and particular, and no one ever saw the hands of Gheezis to be dirty.

The two came to Fort Chippeweyan by way of Lake Winnipeg and the Athabasca, and when they reported to MacTavish he spoke of the Company as no factor is supposed to speak, for he saw further into their hearts than did the important Personage whom they had piloted through gentle dangers. But they were quiet and peaceable, so he had no word against them.

It fell on a day in springtime that Pedoan returned from his hunting, and Ahjeek saw Tibikuk standing by the door of the cabin. Immediately his heart began to beat and his eyes to get red and the sinews on his neck stood out, for he desired her greatly for his wife. But Tibikuk went in and shut the door as if she had not seen him. So all morning he thought and all afternoon he brooded, till evening came and with it came Gheezis.

Ahjeek looked at him and said slowly: "I have seen a girl, and, to-night, I ask for her."

Gheezis did not answer. He kept on humming the Song of the Black Swan, the one that Peguis

wrote just before he died, and presently, lighting his pipe, he laughed at Ahjeek through the smoke.

The other looked at him, but could not tell which eye he was using, till, after a little, Gheezis said, "Has the girl no name that you speak it not?" and laughed again.

Ahjeek did not understand the laugh, but replied "It is Tibikuk; the daughter of Pedoan."

Then Gheezis continued to laugh; but it was strange and hard, and his gaze had turned cold like the water in a hole through the ice. "My brother sleeps like the bear in winter," he sneered. "Long ago I had chosen Tibikuk for myself, and to-night I, Gheezis, speak to Pedoan."

There was silence for a moment and Ahjeek took his skinning knife from his belt, with a piece of the smooth stone that lies on the south side of Great Bear Lake, and began to sharpen it till his eyes got red with staring at Gheezis. The thin man never stirred but filled his pipe again and kept on with the song of the Black Swan. His gaze was turned to Ahjeek, but one could not tell whether hate or laughter was in it.

While he was still smoking the other threw away the stone, and, slipping his finger along the edge, jumped up and said, "What was the word my brother had about Tibikuk?"

Gheezis looked at him and smiled. "The word was that a woman is not worth a man's blood, and we will not fight about one—you and I."

Then Ahjeek crouched low and guarded his breast with the point of the knife. "If you will not fight you will die, and then women will not concern you any more; but Tibikuk and I will speak of you sometimes," he added savagely.

Gheezis winked quickly and gazed at him first with one eye and then the other, so that his glance was like the summer lightning—also he knew that if Ahjeek killed on the Company's ground his punishment was very certain. "Then I am to go the way the white man went on the little island in Lake Winnipeg," he said thoughtfully. "Now that I remember it, he was found with his face down and a hole between his shoulders—and his knife was very like yours, Ahjeek. I could almost think it was the same

knife. If I talked in my sleep I might talk about that Englishman."

Ahjeek's mouth opened, and, dropping the knife, his small red eyes fixed themselves on Gheezis, who stooped to snatch it up and drawled as he examined it:

"See—the handle is the same, and it is marked with the name of the place where the white mother lives across the big sea water. It is a good knife—Ahjeek."

Trembling hands were plucking at his knees. "Kago, Kago, do not say it. It is death for me."

"It was death for the white man," said Gheezis, with his cold flinty smile, "Is my brother now of any mind about Tibikuk? Would he speak to Pedoan to-night?"

But Ahjeek had suddenly lost all desire for Tibikuk, so it came that Gheezis darkened the doorstep of the cabin that same evening. Now, suitors had come by snowshoe and canoe from far places to seek the maid Tibikuk, but Pedoan's wrath and selfishness had always driven them away unsatisfied. Thus, when Gheezis stated his case and cast his crooked eyes on the girl, Pedoan,

guessing aright what manner of man he was, became silent from very fury.

But the suitor still wore that little smile and it broadened as he laid out his gifts; flannel for Pinné, a caddy of tobacco and a bag of powder for Pedoan, and, for Tibikuk, beads and printed cotton and a red silk shawl, and such ornaments as had shone to her envy for months in the glass case in the corner of MacTavish's store.

"It is well that I should know of you before I speak," snapped Pedoan, oblivious to this array. "Who is your father?"

Gheezis hesitated. It was an awkward question, for his father had wandered down into Minnesota, and choked out his life with a bullet in his throat as he was crawling through a settler's window. "My father is a chief and hunts on the Peace River," he said sulkily.

"And you—who are you?"

Tibikuk looked up quickly and for a moment her soft eyes rested on the face of Gheezis. There was something inscrutable in the glance, but to her suitor it expressed many things. "I serve the Company here and on the Moose

River," he said, all the time drinking in the girl's smooth, oval features, the supple brown shoulder, the rich curves of neck and bosom.

Pedoan caught the glance and his wrath burst like a storm. "All this may be true," he hissed, "but I feel that you are a liar." Then, kicking the gifts, he snarled: "The time is not yet when my daughter shall lie with a Saulteau. The Crees do not wed with dogs—begone, and take your gifts with you."

Tibikuk leaned a little toward her suitor. So many had spoken and offered gifts and then gone. So many evenings she had sat silent while her parents talked, that a mute revolt was at last stirring within her. Love comes quickly among the red people of the north, even as the seasons and death; and now there was something in her breast that answered to the voice of Gheezis.

He saw it, and the fire in him burned the fiercer. But the ancestors of Gheezis had been crafty tricksters all, so, although his passion flamed, the cold, cool mind of him asserted itself and he knew that he could bide his time.

"Is this my father's last word?" he said quietly.

"Pedoan speaks but once," flashed back the old man.

Then Gheezis got up, shooting a glance at Tibikuk, and bowing very politely to her mother. "It will not be the last word till I have spoken," he replied meaningly at the door of the cabin, and left his gifts behind him.

With no surprise, he saw, next morning, that the house of Pedoan was empty, for, having enough of Gheezis, the interpreter had slipped off to Lac Clair to hunt moose in the Birch Lake country. And, noting this, Gheezis sat long and silently, puffing smoke from his immoveable face, while plot after plot and plan after plan moved through the darkness of his mind. All day he sat, till, with evening, his sullen visage cleared, and, slouching over to the Post, he asked MacTavish for a week's holiday for Ahjeek and himself.

The factor looked hard at the evil eyes, for suspicion had shrouded the man like a cloak, but, in the end, glad to be rid of him for a space, the leave was granted.

Then Gheezis spoke to Ahjeek. "Pedoan has

called me a dog, and kicked my gifts, and I go to have more talk with him. So do you come too."

Ahjeek grinned. "Your courting was short; the girl wants a better man."

The other stared at him, gazing first into the broad scarred face, then at the skinning knife. No word was spoken, but, so intense was the stare that Ahjeek's hand crept to the knife and, the instant his brown fingers touched its haft he remembered the Englishman; then he knew what the stare meant. Gheezis saw that he knew. "You come too," he repeated, with a lift in his voice.

"Yes," replied Ahjeek slowly, "I come."

Next morning he thought hard as the foam began to whisper, and the canoe turned, not westward toward the narrows that lead to Lac Clair, but eastward to the broad entrance of the Slave river. All day he thought, saying nothing, even though the manner of their journey was like no other journey he ever made, for they dawdled down the broad stream, staying to talk with everyone whom Gheezis told that they were going north, even as far as the bitter water.

When night came he would have no fire but sat by himself humming the Song of Peguis. Then, when it was dark, picking up his paddle, he motioned to Ahjeek to take the bow.

"Where do we go?" said the big man angrily, being tired of this nonsense.

"To see my father-in-law," said Gheezis grimly. Ahjeek shivered a little, not that the night was cold, but because he saw death in the eyes of his friend. So all through the darkness they paddled hard against the stream, passed the post ere morning, and, heading for the narrows, left the canoe there.

It was a hard trip on foot through the dead timber, and they made no fire on the way, but, on the second morning, Gheezis peered across a patch of smooth water as he lay on his belly in the long grass. Opposite, where the green forest marched down to a strip of sandy shore, was the camp to which they had come through the wilderness like a wolf to his den. His brow wrinkled and the muscles of his face twitched as Pinné put her grey head out of the tent and called to Tibikuk whose lithe figure was moving

through the trees. But when Pedoan came down to the shore and put a rifle in his canoe, Gheezis lay closer in the grass, steadied his elbows on the ground, and laid one keen eye along the glinting barrel of his gun. Then he shook his head and turned to Ahjeek. "It is better to wait," he said, smiling.

The old man paddled stiffly across the bay to the mouth of a little river that slipped into it opposite his camp, while Pinné and Tibikuk watched him, and, from the long grass the others watched him too.

Within the hour Pedoan had killed his moose and sat beside it, smoking. Because he was old he wondered whether it would be easier to take the moose to camp or have the women move the camp to the great rough-coated animal that lay so motionless on the moss. Then, as the incense of his pipe ascended and the sunlight chequered the ground with a myriad of little patches, his mind turned to Tibikuk and the Saulteau who had covered the floor of his cabin with gifts—and this was the last thought of Pedoan.

In the ground hemlock behind him were the

cross-eyed one and Ahjeek. As he had tracked the moose, whose hooves left their print in the soft earth, so had they trailed him; and never were bear or deer so closely tracked as had been Pedoan. They had moved like shadows through the woods. To their beady eyes the soil was a book of simple reading—here he had rested, for the butt of the rifle had left a mark and its muzzle had scratched a tree trunk; there he had found the moose track and stopped to think, for the footprints were deeper. By leaves and twigs and a thousand faint and almost imperceptible things, by wisdom of the forest and the not understandable faculty of inherited ages, they had found and followed him to this.

"Under the arm," whispered Gheezis, and the man with the scarred face pointed his rifle, he knew not why, at the side of Pedoan. But, just as his finger crooked to the pull, a vision swam across the muzzle. It was of a big man, with yellow hair lying in the grass, who got up suddenly and looked at him with a world of reproach in his clear blue eyes. Then he no more saw Pedoan or anything else, and the barrel

began to make uncertain little circles in the air, till the sinewy hand of Gheezis shot silently out and pulled it down.

He shut his own eyes, but opened them again just as Gheezis pulled the trigger. The report was like thunder. Pedoan started suddenly and his shoulders went up; then he swayed for a moment and rolled slowly over on his side, and, where they hid, they could hear him choking with the blood in his throat. The two looked at each other as the echoes rolled out and crashed back from the bluff side of a great hill that lifted to the north. Then Gheezis laughed horribly and, walking over, stood looking down at the body.

"It is not many days ago," he said, with a chill triumph in his voice, "that you called me a dog; but there is not left now anyone to call me that. I ask you again for Tibikuk, my father."

The leaves began to rustle in a gentle northerly wind as he turned to Ahjeek. "I have asked Pedoan, and you see this time he has not refused me," he said, with a revolting laugh, "so now I go to Tibikuk.

There was still more weight in the wind, when, at noon, Tibikuk stared under her lifted hand at a canoe that came across from the little river. But when the tall, lean figure of Gheezis slouched up across the sand, her heart began to jump and she ran to the tent. So it was Pinné who met him.

"I seek Pedoan," he said smoothly.

Tibikuk glanced from behind her mother and became strangely silent when she met the fire in the crooked eyes. "Pedoan hunts by the little river," grunted Pinné, with no joy for this unwelcome suitor. "He killed this morning and will be back soon."

"I too have killed," smiled Gheezis. "Bring the meat," he called to Ahjeek.

So all that afternoon the men smoked and ate and brought wood and water for Pinné; and Gheezis sat beside Tibikuk, and the manner of his love-making was such that in the girl's breast began to stir something she had never known before. He told her of the little bottles with wires in them that made the light at Winnipeg, and of the black horse that ate stones and water and pulled wooden houses on wheels. And, hear-

ing all this and more, there filtered into Tibikuk's mind a great longing to see these things with the crooked-eyed man who knew so much.

The sun dipped till he glared large and red and round through the tree tops, but still Pedoan came not. At last Pinné grew fearful and spoke. "Gheezis, my husband is dead or hurt. Go seek him by the little river."

Gheezis turned slowly. He had been staring at the place where Tibikuk's neck smoothed out into her shoulder in a soft brown curve. He had seen many women, but desired none till he found this girl, and the afternoon had been one long voluptuous anticipation. Now, he had but to put out his hand and take. The knowledge filled him with a fierce satisfaction. "Pedoan is a great hunter, also he is wise," he said diffidently. "Why should hurt come to him?"

"But there were two shots," pleaded Pinné, twisting her nervous hands. "The first did not kill, perhaps not the second."

Gheezis turned his eyes again to Tibikuk. "Perhaps both killed," he said thoughtfully. "It is late. I will go to-morrow."

Pinné glanced down the shore to the canoe, and Ahjeek, who lay beside it, rolled over on his elbow and stared at her. He had been there all day, but she had never realised it till now. Again she glanced, and, doing so, her heart stopped. For at the water line, on the yellow bow, was a brown patch of gum, and its outline was of a man's face.

She stood and gazed, while her soul trembled under the waves of cold fear that beat upon it. It was Pedoan's canoe. She had made the patch. Slowly her eyes swung round, till they rested on Gheezis. He was leaning forward and watching her intently. Then, carelessly, but with her heart pounding in her shrivelled old breast, she turned and went into the tent.

At midnight, with the touch of a hand on her wrist, Tibikuk struggled slowly out of riotous dreams. It was very dark. Through the tent she could hear the north wind whipping the tree tops. The hand crept to her hot lips and her mother's figure bent over her. At her feet lay Gheezis and Ahjeek beneath their blankets, and the sound of their breathing was heavy.

"You will wake them, my mother," she whispered through the lean fingers, "What is it?"

"Your father is dead," breathed Pinné, "and these men have killed him." The old woman felt her daughter tremble in the dark. She did not know that the girl's foot had touched the sleeping form of Gheezis and that the touch had run through her like fire. Then, slowly, blind horror worked into her mind, and, between horror and passion, she trembled the more.

"I tell you this, that to-morrow you may understand and do what I tell you. Till then be very still."

All night Tibikuk lay and stared at the ridge-pole. Pedoan was old when she was born, and he had kept her close, being the child of his age. There were no sisters or brothers, nothing but the stern hunter and his grizzled wife. Tibikuk was twenty-three. Her bosom was ripe to bursting. No little hands had ever touched it, and no man had ever taken her in his arms, but now a strong one had come and not gone away like all the others. Again her foot touched him gently, and

again the fire ran through her. Love is untempered in the North. It is born in the stillness of the forest, and nourished in the wide sweep of empty spaces where only the lovers exist, and so it was that she lay silent with her foot against the unconscious Gheezis and that delicate fire throbbing in her veins.

In the morning the women watched the canoe dwindle toward the little river, and Pinné, shaken with fury, dry-lipped for revenge, turned to her daughter. "Are you mad? I tell you Gheezis has killed Pedoan."

"Then why do they search for him?" said Tibikuk, heavy-eyed and languid.

"Search," replied her mother contemptuously, "They go to sleep, not to search; and they will die in their sleep."

But the girl's soul, trembling with the sudden fierce upspringing of love, was numb to all else. Even the thought of her father's death hammered fruitlessly at her understanding. As in a trance she heard her mother: "The great spirit spoke to me in the night, and sent Keewaydin, the north wind, to help me; so that we two women,

without arms, will go and kill two armed men. Look!"

Tibikuk looked and saw the canoe vanish into the little river. The lake was white with foam, and through the dead timber droned the weight of a great wind. Suddenly her mother's arms closed about her neck. "Tibikuk, my little one, will you let your mother go alone?" She tore open her cotton dress, "See the breast that fed you! It is all dried up. Is your love dried up too? I have carried you so many miles, Tibikuk. In the year of the great hunger, I carried you from the Moose River to Fort Rae, and often Pedoan carried us both. It is your mother that speaks, Tibikuk!"

Slowly the girl's eyes raised till they met the distorted face of Pinné. It was transformed into an epitome of suffering, and at the sight, memory moved in her daughter. Little half-forgotten happenings crept into her brain, some of the thousand nameless things that dwell even in savage breasts. In the light of these she saw the past, till, seeing it, the wonderful future became dim and shadowy. Then her soul shook

at a vision of Gheezis, but the vision changed as he raised a rifle, pointing it at her father. Then the rifle spoke, and she shut her eyes, and trembled. "I will come, my mother, I will come."

Together they skirted the shore, moving quietly and smoothly as Gheezis himself had done. First there had been the hunter, then those that trailed him, and now, lastly, the women crept on the way of death. Up the little stream, by the big bluff, they found Pedoan's canoe, with the brown patch on its bow, and, at the sight, Pinné kissed the smooth bark, with the tears trickling down her face. They left it with the paddles placed very carefully, and its stem pointing down the narrow line of black water that slipped out of sight in the dead timber. Then upstream to the bluff, and here Pinné said: "The great Spirit spoke truth and Keewaydin is very strong. Here are the little firesticks from the Post." She pushed a box of matches into Tibikuk's hand. "The men sleep, one on each side of the river, the men that killed Pedoan. Your father did not know why he died and these men will die in their sleep."

Tibikuk stood motionless, her eyes rounded with fear; till her mother spoke again. "You will go west and I will go east, and on the way back we will come very quickly and make fire in many places, as the Spirit told me. Go quickly, my daughter."

She turned and vanished. For an instant the girl stood, and then she too disappeared. The moments passed. An otter slid noiselessly down stream, and, back in the underbush an animal pressed by with a breaking of small sticks. Suddenly, to east and west, sprang up small puffs of light grey smoke, and in the distance sounded a faint snapping and crackling. The film broadened, thrusting up rounded curls that blew away and grew again with louder and sharper crackling. The smoke neared the river, and, just as a light flame flickered at the far end of it, Tibikuk ran out panting. The fire was growing in the east and Pinné came not.

"Mother," called the girl.

The only answer was a new and vicious voice. She could see wreaths of fire envelope the dead

birches and blossom out like gigantic torches. "Mother," she called.

The fire crept nearer and blasts of burning air struck her in the face. Then she ran in on her mother's trail. A little way from the river lay Pinné, her hip broken, her features distorted with agony. Tibikuk leaned to lift her, but the old woman shook her head and tried to smile. "It is the end," she said faintly. "Save yourself, my little Tibikuk."

There was a world of love in it, and her daughter's voice broke as she put her head on the old woman's shoulder. "There is nothing left, my mother," she said through the smoke "I will stay."

With a groan Pinné raised herself and stared. An eddy in the wind had carried the fire north, and it now turned to sweep down on them. "You love Gheezis?" she whispered brokenly.

Tibikuk buried her face against her mother's breast. "I love him, and I have killed him," she answered convulsively.

A wave of flame closed down on them and Pinné turned to beat it out. Then came another

and another. She gazed down at the brown head. "My little bird," she said weakly, "my poor little bird."

The wind pressed from the barren lands ever more fiercely and drove the blast before it like a tempest. "Run, my daughter, run quickly," stammered Pinné, as the scorched air took her withered throat. "Run quickly; Gheezis will be seeking the canoe."

The girl sprang to her feet. No other words than these could have snatched her from this crackling furnace. No power less mighty than newly wakened love could have drawn her irresistibly from a death that already seemed sweet. "I go, mother," she gasped, and darted toward the river bank. She turned once and looked back. But Pinné lay still, with her dress drawn over her eyes.

The canoe leaped down the narrow stream to the lift of the girl's agonised strokes—leaped till a fringe of lace twinkled out on the black water under the trembling delicate bow. And, as the pall overhead mounted ever darker and heavier to the zenith, Tibikuk's voice rose the louder, with

calls of birds and animals, flying from the red death that came apace. "Gheezis," she wailed, "Gheezis."

But there came no answer. Back in the forest the fire was striking hard. From the heart of it came roaring and explosions. The draught of it sucked up trees and branches and flung them like flaming arrows through the air. Winged things soared to escape and were tossed and buffeted, scorched and seared in its fuming vortex. The wild populace of the forest fled for refuge not to be found, fled in a tumbling terror-stricken avalanche over the bodies of two men, forms that writhed and stretched and twisted, but never woke to life. Neither fur nor feather escaped that day, save only when it reached the cooling depths of the lake, for there at last the conflagration was stayed. The moon rose, blinking through the smoke at the black desolation that marched northward to the big bluff. The wind had dropped to a whisper. Halfway across, between the camp ground and the little river, floated Pedoan's canoe. Tubikuk leaned weakly on the thwarts, her blank eyes fixed on the desolation that had engulfed the

world. For a long time she stayed thus—then the canoe grounded flatly on the sandy shore. Dumbly—as one dazed—she got out and tottered to the camp. The tent door was open, and within lay the blanket on which Gheezis had slept at her feet. She cried out once, as one suddenly stricken, and, throwing herself upon it, buried her face in its folds.

THE TURNING POINT

If, on its quiet and shadowed way
My spirit first shall slip, to wait
The coming of thine own, I pray
That God will be compassionate:

Nor rob me utterly of sight,
Nor close mine ears, but may I see
Some vision of mine old delight
And hear thee in eternity:

That my unfettered soul may move
Conscious of memories that bless,—
The rare divinity of love,
And thine immortal tenderness.

THE TURNING POINT

HENDRICK'S wife stood for a long time and watched his departing form swing into the morning mist. He turned at the gate, as he always did, and, as on every day, she waved her hand. Then the fog engulfed him.

There was something in its soft density, in its impalpable obscurity strongly akin to her own mood, and it held her motionless. The earth was very still and in its silence she could detect the troubled questions of her own heart; unreasoning, unjustified, she had told herself a thousand times, but yet of an insistence that seemed almost immortal. If it were anything else that she feared her own judgment would have revolted, but that she should be oppressed by love itself was well nigh hideous. Like a creature trapped in some delicate snare she had essayed every affectionate escape, but ever as she moved toward any expression of individuality she was swamped by an

adoration that left her breathless. She loved, God knew that she loved, but life seemed to be bounded by sacrificial altars which her husband heaped anew with passionate offerings.

She had watched this grow from a bridal worship into a consuming flame that now almost choked her with its intensity, and with it grew the consciousness that her intellectual vitality was being sapped by the response it demanded. There were no little voices to answer the question, indeed in that case there would have been no question to answer.

As she gazed, the fog lifted and daintily divested itself of garden and hedge. The horizon widened into clean beautiful green things, and, with the enlarging world, her mind suddenly expanded to a solution. Doubt, misunderstanding, even resentment, it might cost all of these, but she was ready to pay the price.

Weeks later, during an evening that to Hendrick at least was full of satisfying nearness, her pent-up spirit spoke, but there was nothing in the smooth tones that revealed the voicing of a great ambition.

"Stephen."

He looked up and something in his grey eyes made her pause, "Yes, dear."

"I—I want to go to Europe in January with the Reynolds."

The grey eyes opened wider, "You want to what?"

"Go to Europe with the Reynolds. I saw them yesterday," she hastened on, "and they renewed an invitation made months ago, but I didn't like to tell you. It sounded too miserably selfish, and——"

Her words trailed out, silenced by a quick apprehension and the beating of her own heart. Hendrick stared with a puzzled wistfulness. He was conscious of a chill that seemed to radiate from the very presence he so loved, and in which he was wont to move to his soul's great content.

It was typical of the man that his answer reflected her rather than himself. "How long do you want to be away, Lois?"

"Stephen—dear—don't put it like that; four months," she added, gazing at him with beseech-

ing eyes. "Husband, I don't want to go unless you want me to. I know how it must sound; but trust me and send me."

At the words, Hendrick, in spite of himself, fell to thinking how immeasurably she had trusted him, and they struck him with a strange direct reasonableness.

He had told her a thousand times of his utter dependency, he had felt it most in those too rare moments when she had faintly responded to his adoration, but now her detachmemt from the sheltering arms impressed him with a sudden respect.

"Lois, dear one, of course you can go. I can just dimly guess what it will all mean to you. I'd trust you out of this world into the next. You know you're all I've got."

She was conscious at once of an absolute dissolving of his soul in her own. Often and again she had been burdened with a sense of the lodgement of Hendrick's spirit in her breast, till her very thoughts were coloured by an unnatural duality. She had reckoned that her husband would let her go and had read him truly enough,

but it was fate that the very thing from which she fled should open the gates.

There was a mingling of eyes, a long interchange, even intersearching, of soul, that filled her with a sudden fear; then Lois had a glimpse of herself standing alone, uninfluenced and unconstrained, and to the vision her whole nature mounted in eager response.

She told him what a woman tells to the man who has displaced all others in her heart by the sheer weight, not the sheer joyousness, of his love. Hendrick, with a mind in a riot at her departure, was nursed through mood and tense by a wise devotion that never slackened to the hour of Lois sailing. He was hungry for her and she knew it. He remembered vividly what even their short separations had meant to him, he could understand her longing, but was baffled by her willingness to go.

The parting was a loving deception, which however deceived neither. Hendrick's prospective loneliness appalled him, but he said nothing; his wife's happy visions vanished and she gave no sign. It was just one of these little domestic

tragedies which were being enacted all around them, but which they shared for the first sharp time.

Soon the throb of the vessel awakened her to a keen perception that seemed to pierce her years of indecision. She felt suddenly as if the torrent of her husband's worship had been bridged by some structure that carried her over its impetuous flood, and on the other side waited a thousand new and beautiful things.

The vast empty horizon, the gigantic sweep of the hard blue sky, the clean wind breathing over the salty leagues, the cleft waves racing along the smooth black side, all these inoculated her with a sense of new existence that was entrancing. She was so delightfully alive, and, in a way, so emancipated, that in the very uncertainty of the future lay its charm. It was like the soaring of a singing lark into rare and odorous space.

Some suggestion of what it all meant to his wife, and blind faith at least in her judgment, sustained Hendrick for the first few days, then the inflexible demands of his position engulfed him for a time. It was a work to which he

gave his best, but there had always seemed a grim irony in the destiny that made him the superintending engineer of a huge factory. He called himself the millhand, in spite of gentle remonstrance. His evident palpable life moved through a maze of mechanical creatures of his own contriving. His office was the nerve centre of the factory. His domain was peopled by countless diligent machines and vibrated with the movement of vast powers.

Now he looked to all this for some expression it had never yielded before; he sought forgetfulness of loneliness.

There was something else to which he turned instinctively, something guarded almost fiercely from those who knew him best. It was the consciousness of his almost dual life. One existence, ostensible and productive, mirrored the man to his friends—a progressive, active engineer; the other revealed a shy, sensitive personality, subjective and imaginative. One part of him gave orders, bore responsibility, did the work and comported itself normally and methodically; the other, and this was to him his active and

real self, was swayed by spiritual emotion and fragments of his dreams.

The isolation he dreaded closed in. He felt it in the sudden first distaste of his work. All the necessary little crudities of it became unbearably wearisome, more, even repellant, till out of them arose a strange distrust of his own powers. He found himself pointless and inefficient. Then, because his essential faith was shaken, he essayed his other self.

In the midst of a questioning mood he was summoned to the power house, where throbbed the rythmical giants that vitalized the factory. One of the engines, a huge Corliss, was intractable. She was petted, oiled, rubbed and polished till her vast smooth limbs shone like silver. Her foundations groped deep in the earth, her fly-wheel bisected the place with its burnished rim, and Hendrick stood studying her vagaries with his foreman. There were little questioning pauses that only an engineer could note—small irregularities that betrayed themselves in a flicker on the switchboard. A thousand horse power was at work, but the

horses were not pulling together. He reviewed her former ailments as a surgeon does the past history of a patient, then a forefinger was laid on a rocking metal block.

"Your trouble is in here, Bob. It's nothing but valves, dirt in 'em. We all get something in our valves occasionally, mine need overhauling now. There, watch her slow down. Better take them out to-night. I'll come if you want me."

Bob shook his head with something of relief. "You needn't come, sir, that's all right." Then, as they turned to the door he hesitated, and blurted. "There's something else, Mr Hendrick, I meant to speak of it before. But——" His words died out in a strange confusion, and Hendrick looked at him puzzled.

"Well?"

"It's not exactly engines either," he actually blushed, "we got a man child over at our place last week, and—and—I want you to godfather him, if you're agreeable. We named him after you."

It was all so remote from anything he had

expected, and there was such a moving homeliness about it, that Hendrick stared, with a sudden rush of longing in his own heart. But Bob's grime streaked face was impassive and a pair of steady grey eyes demanded an answer. His hand went out and rested on the foreman's shoulder.

"You honour me, Bob—and, I envy you—and I'll do my best for the lad." Then his palm collapsed in the grip that took it.

For days his mind was surcharged with questions that could not be denied, and for the first unforgettable time doubt entered. His confidence in himself, his wife, his work, vanished; and even aspiration did not move him. The full tide of her passionate response must ultimately mingle with his own worship. He had believed this and lived toward it. Every flight of his restless spirit was buoyed by it. He knew that his was a love that must satisfy itself by eye and ear and touch and caress, and for lack of these the very tissue of life was consuming in intensity of longing.

Thus her first letter found him. He devoured it eagerly, rapturously, then with a slow deadening comprehension that it was not the message he

craved. He did not want such gentle thanks or photographic details of a delightful trip, but a sign that no imagination could ever read into these modulated lines.

Rubbing the thin sheets between his fingers, as though to extract some fibre of the life that had inscribed them, he was suddenly whirled into a revulsion of feeling. He was wrong—by God, he was all wrong. He was pouring himself out to one who would never, never see him as he was. It was a violation of his inmost spirit.

The dull thunder of the factory drifted in through an opening door and his mind pitched mechanically on the intractable Corliss. That was it—adjustment—his own valve motion was out of order, they both needed adjustment. Then in a flood of sentimental revolt he wrote:

"I feel that my point of view about our marriage has been too intense, and may even have made it hard for you. I have always thought that I was only half alive unless I was in some way expressing my love for you, and wonder that you have never found me too emotional for a normally comfortable life. Now that you are not here

everything is strangely changed, and I have pent up within me what I have so long poured out on you, and honestly, dear, it frightens me. At this moment I have a dreadful longing for you to pull my head down on your shoulder, and lavish yourself upon me as you never have. It will relieve you to know that I have decided to be more of the standard husband and reorganize myself for our mutual benefit. This will take a little time and its rather a painful process, so it is just as well you will not be here.

"I am vexed to confess that I have not been able to do any writing since you left. The springs of imagination seem to have dried up. Everything all right here, except one engine that insists on sulking like its master."

Utter weariness took him and he experienced illimitable loneliness, such as must some time come to those whose highest existence is to waste themselves on one beloved. The second parting was worse than the first. He was crushed beneath the Juggernaut of his own idealism.

It was typical of the man that his mind did not veer into contemplation of what might have

happened had he married another, nor did he ever distantly imagine the possibility of seeking companionship elsewhere. Up to the day of their meeting his heart had been like some broad, untenanted plain, over which swept the free and taintless winds of heaven. He had unconsciously kept himself unspotted, through a certain fine delicate instinct, and because he vibrated to the beauty and mystery of life; and so, through all the subtle progress and change of mind and body, there was being stored up within him a flame of pure and noble passion. Through this he lived and laboured. It was his vehicle of expression, his inspiration, his solace, the great and reasonable reason for everything.

He had not dreamed that it could burden his wife; he would never have dreamed it save in the ghastly loneliness of days that were. Now the sudden sensing of this unimaginable thing worked like a dull and creeping poison in his brain.

Weeks later he was walking through the factory a half hour before the day's end. Every where desperate haste was visible. Men stood impatiently beside machines that marked time to their

own impatience. Vistas opened of power, method and production. It was all perfect in its own way and his work was better than himself.

Suddenly the long ranks of incandescent lights rose and fell again and again from an intense unwonted brilliancy to a dull red. The electric motors varied their speed with them till the room was full of a vast rythmical palpitation. The balance of things was gone.

The hands stepped back nervously from their work and looked after Hendrick, who was running towards the power house. As he reached it, Bob dashed in ahead of him.

"Quick, Bob," he shouted, "shut her off."

The foreman jumped at the handle of the steam valve controlling the racing Corliss, but it would not turn, the swaying of the engine had jammed it fast. He pulled desperately, and a quick grayness mounted into his cheeks!

"Jump, sir, jump, the wheel is going."

Close beside Hendrick the great fly-wheel flashed through the air, its glistening rim like a streak of flying silver. Then, in the roar of gathering destruction, came a small voice with a question

to the engineer. Instantaneously there dropped a calm in the centre of this cyclone and he remembered that if the governor chain could be broken the engine must stop—if not, catastrophe waited.

He swung toward it a little uncertainly, for he was a strong man and loved life, then with a vision of his wife's face, with her name on his lips, flung himself square across it.

He was borne like a leaf on its sharp surface back to the clattering valve motion. It tightened across him, stretched and broke with a sharp snap. Instantly the safety mechanism clicked into action. A shudder ran through the whole gigantic frame, as if blind fury shrank appalled from the sacrifice, and the speed of the great wheel began to slacken. Then slowly, with grinding and groaning of ruptured metal it came to rest.

The boiler valves roared out their pent-up energy. The factory, plunged suddenly into darkness, echoed with the sound of running stumbling feet, and a multitude of men raced into outer safety. The engine room had dropped into a strange silence. In the dusk of the winter

evening its gigantic tenant loomed monstrous and forbidding, and beside it Bob knelt on the floor over the limp and twisted body of his chief.

. . . . . .

Lois and her companions, the Reynolds, raced through the major portion of Europe in a breathless American fashion. The journey resolved itself into a series of hasty packings and unpackings, but they finally arrived in Algiers fortified by having at least been in close proximity to a number of interesting things.

Beneath the palms of the Hotel Gorgia the last remnants of her resolve for self-improvement vanished. The easy carefree acceptance that had in her friends seemed at first so irresponsible, became at once the most delightful and natural of views, and if her mind groped at first for its fleeting Puritanism she soon lost herself in the mystery and beauty of a wonderful world. Now, as ever, the plain uncompromising West yielded to the spell of the immemorial East.

It was on the knees of the gods that Kingston should have been at the Gorgia; Kingston with his long lank figure, his delicate nervous hands

and inscrutable eyes. There was a strain in him that answered to the call and involuntarily, once a year, he deserted his studio and drifted in silent contentment to Algiers. Something like weariness of the praise of his plutocratic clients seized him with an annual disgust that would only be smoothed out in this semi-tropical Nirvana. There was a restful depth in the atmosphere of mountain, city and purple sky, to which he turned with a vast satisfaction. It could always be depended on, it was always responsive and it never talked, and this was balm to Kingston.

He surprised himself no less than his friends by demanding an introduction to Lois, and even felt a faint thrill of pleasure as he met the timid inquiry in her brown eyes. She had heard of Kingston, she had seen his picture in the Metropolitan, and had dimly wondered at the quality of mind that could translate such beauty. Now, meeting him, she saw not so much the painter himself but his last great work—the grey walls of the Kasbah, the white tortuous streets of the ancient city, and behind all the blue haze of the Atlas hills. In a way it was reasonable that

all this should invest him with interest, and that he should seem the personification of all that this new strange journey could offer her. He was different from any man she had ever known. His character unveiled itself in fragments that seemed each to suggest something still more characteristic, and his cynicism, tempered to a needle-point, was too delicately perfect to wound.

In the Gorgia Gardens she first spoke freely of herself and he listened with a grave deference modulated by an elusive twinkle.

"I feel almost wicked to be so happy so far away from home, and yet——"

"Yet what," he said, watching her beneath his drooping lids.

"Something here seems to literally take hold of me; I can't explain."

"That's the way of the East. Of course you can't explain, the charm would break if you could. But I don't see any depravity in your happiness."

She laughed and his eye caught something of the light in her own. "If I may have a guess you take things too seriously—don't, it spoils everything."

"For instance," she hazarded.

Her silence was inviting and he drawled on, "I used to slave and be very serious over it, but I didn't do good work. People wouldn't buy, and I don't blame them. Then I realized that what the world wants is the lighter touch, not the heavy hand, so I got over all that. As to pleasure, its much the same thing—some people work over it, but I don't. And the same thing applies to the other great occupation."

"Which," she smiled?

"Love," he said slowly.

Lois' mind flashed to Hendrick in his throbbing factory, and suddenly wondered why she had never even seen it.

"I would like to know what you think of that; since I am happily and safely married," she added.

He lit a cigarette and watched a ring of smoke curling into the breathless air: "That is as it ought to be and I congratulate him, so what I say doesn't apply to you. I know people, however, who are so painfully in love that they can't forget it for a moment. Their friends feel as though

they were in some hallowed presence and had forgotten to rub their spiritual feet on an ethereal mat. Now I call that positively indecent; besides, it is fatal to individuality, it is too absorptive."

Lois stared at the flannel clothed oracle whose careless shaft had sped so straight.

"But some people are made like that," she said, in faint feminine confusion; and then, nerved by some swift instinct of protection, "When its real it is beautiful."

"It may be. Not knowing, can't say, but extremity of devotion ought to be kept at home in a cupboard and only taken out occasionally. When a man has a seizure like that, only one woman is beautiful, not all, and it is not fair to the sex. Where would your poets and painters come in if they concentrated like that? Think it over."

She did think it over, and through her thoughts moved also Kingston's figure. It seemed impossible for him to be serious, but his quizzical humour was touched with a wide experience.

Hendrick's letter came, a potent reminder of actualities. Why should he speed her holiday

and then cloud it with the tale of his own loneliness? His attitude, if not his words, condemned her absence, and it filled her with a mute resentment. He might at least have waited until he had found himself. All through the letter ran the suggestion that he had given more than he had received. This roused her, till, into her wounded heart filtered a slow understanding. He had come to the turning in the road that she had longed for, but more quickly than she had ever dreamed.

This almost too sudden fruition of her plan filled her with uncertainty of her own powers. Had she dropped a staff to take a reed herself to lean upon? Then suddenly conscious of the nearness and beauty of the new life, she kissed the letter. "I am so sorry, dear," she whispered, "but oh! so thankful."

She was never so much in love with life as at that moment. She could not trust herself to answer it yet, and it lay in her bosom like a passport to a new world.

The next day Kingston did, for him, a very unusual thing, and headed a luncheon party to the

Kasbah. When the rest of her friends had disappeared into the grey ramparts, he stretched himself at Lois' feet. There was something about his loose-jointed ease that fitted into her relaxing mind. Life had changed greatly in the last few hours, and he seemed to typify the diverse interest that awaited her.

For a long time neither spoke. There was much indeed that spoke to them, for below and beyond an exquisite world smiled up breathing a sharp sensuous beauty.

Then Kingston's voice came in, slow, even and uncoloured. He told her of his own life, of his placid, if youthful, defiance of a moribund school of painting, of his sudden success and subsequent prosperity. Through it all he seemed to have won out by independent diffidence. He knew many men and most places. He had wandered everywhere, care-free and casual, and, as Lois listened, she heard unfolded the intimate things that lie behind common knowledge. More than anything his quaint individuality held her. He detached himself gracefully from stress or strain and looked down with humourous cynicism on a

toiling world—and yet his chief characteristic was brains.

Lois found herself envying him these things for Hendrick. She had the feminine attribute of imagining possibilities where none existed, and, like many wives, credited her husband with latent powers that only awaited their appointed time. Kingston, wise, witty and restful, with the world at his feet, because he had dared to despise it, lounged at the goal to which her husband must win.

Over her reverie came the African twilight, and the dusk brought them to the cactus guarded gates of the Gorgia. As she turned to thank Kingston for his escort, a boy ran up with a telegram, and handed it to her. With a sudden tightening of the heart she tore it open and read:

"Hendrick seriously injured. Outcome doubtful. Return at once. United Manufacturing."

She stood motionless for a time and then raised a white face to Kingston. Her eyes were pitiful with a dumb stricken terror, and she held the message out to him helplessly.

"Poor little girl," he said softly, "Poor little girl."

She remembered but little of the next hours save that in the flash of this lightning stroke was born a strange and consuming love of her husband. She felt her soul awake. A thousand unheeded happenings sprang into precious reality of meaning and she recoiled from the thought of herself.

Kingston quickly changed to the man of action. He found the sailing of the *Messagerie* boat, which was the same evening. He secured places on the Paris train, and telegraphed for a berth on the *Harmonic*, which it was just possible to catch.

Lois moved blindly through all the hurry of departure. A horrible sense of distance crushed her. The Mediterranean slid slowly by; Marseilles vanished in a blur of yellow light, Paris was a succession of long streets between two stations, and then at last the *Harmonic* thrust her sharp bows out of Havre Harbour.

She was conscious of nothing but a dreadful desire to get to him. The horizon mocked her, and over the gray blankness of the sea came memories, insistent, searching and not to be denied. She began dimly to see that Hendrick's

passionate abandonment of worship had raised him to spiritual heights that few men ever reach. That he was drunk with the beauty and mystery of love, and that she had unconsciously fed on this, even though some lesser part of her nature had rebelled. In dire uncertainty she felt a sickening remorse at having coveted for him attributes she did not think he possessed. Now, she prayed to enter again into his life, not as before, but entirely trusting and thankful.

Wireless messages told her he was fighting for life; they could not in fairness tell her more. She did not know the nature of his accident. The vast forces of which he spoke so lightly had seemed too subdued to threaten him. Then, as the end of the voyage approached, the bulletins grew less hopeful and she shrank at the thought that this might be in preparation for the end.

The ocean narrowed to a bay and with the pilot came one of the partners of the United Manufacturing Co., a cheery, middle-aged man for whom Hendrick had entertained a great respect.

He took her hand in a gentle, almost affection-

ate grasp, and, in the short hour that was left, told her all. He told it as a father might of his son, and as the ship slowly passed up the Jersey shore, he pointed to the tall stacks and vast bulk of his factory.

"There are a hundred men there who daily thank him for their lives."

Lois looked and shuddered. She could not speak. As they drove to the hospital something in her brain was hammering, "He lives, he lives—he must live," and as she ran up the steps, Bob stumbled out.

The big man's face was distorted and his eyes were red. His head went up at sight of her and his great hands closed over her own.

"God help you, Mum. I can't stand for it. I'm going home to my woman."

The simple phrase cut deep to a heart already well nigh broken; that was what her husband had been wanting to do. Then she was taken to his room and stopped panting at a closed door. Some one opened it and she faced a screen. The room was in a half light and the penetrating hospital odour was everywhere.

From behind the screen came the babble of a thin voice that rose and fell and continued ceaselessly and called. "Yes, Yes. Good-bye, Lois. Valve motion, Bob, dirt in it, nothing else: we all get dirt in our valves. You're too fond of No. 3, Bob; it isn't good for either of you. Everybody get readjusted."

His brain ran wild and poured out a medley of pitiful images in a high querulous note.

A nurse's hand motioned and Lois stood beside him. The wreck of his broad strong figure flung itself restlessly across the bed. His face was unmarked, but the unseeing eyes that met hers were dreadfully bright, they seemed to belong to the shadow of a man—this was her husband.

A blinding wave swept over her and she looked imploringly at the nurse who nodded in a depth of sympathy. Then she flung herself beside the bed and drew him to her heart.

At the touch he drifted into a strange calm and lay with blank eyes gazing up into her own, as if wondering why any one should hold him thus. Then her face bent close against his own and her soul spoke through trembling lips. "My

husband, can you hear me? I want you, come back to me; I want you, come back, beloved."

The world stood still for a moment to watch the miracle of love. As the infinite pleading in her voice reached down through the tortured channels of his brain, the spirit heard and knew. Amid the shadows it vibrated to the one chord that was deathless. The mysterious process of his transition thrilled and halted at this divine infusion. His wife's arms held him closer, and reason slowly won her way back to the empty throne. The tense body relaxed in her embrace, the fire softened in his eyes and the tired lids fluttered and dropped softly down. He sighed once, like a weary child, and then lay still with his head at last upon her breast.

An eternity sped by, but she dared not move. Then a hand was laid gently on her shoulder, and she looked up to see the Doctor. He was smiling.

THE MANITOU MAIL

Bit of canvas, strap of leather,
Lock to hold the two together ;
Big "R.M." in stencil stamped
Where the shapeless thing is clamped.
Ends and corners frayed to rags,
Thrust in sacks and dunnage bags ;
Bent or doubled, long or short,
Rammed beneath the springing thwart
That the brown canoe-men grip
'Twixt a curving thigh and hip :
Flattened 'neath toboggan thong,
When the winter ways are long,
And the half-breed's tireless tramp
Smashes down the trail to camp.

Thus and thus the mail sack goes,
Through the rapids, through the snows :
Limp and worn, but strong to bless,
In the waiting wilderness ;
Patched, but potent with the speech
Of stricken people—out of reach.

THE MANITOU MAIL

If you take a pair of compasses and drop one leg into the northern end of Little Manitou Lake, and swing the other in a hundred and twenty mile circle, the curve will strike the Morning Star Mine, at least, it would a few years ago. To-day it will still strike the Morning Star —but the water is clucking contemptuously at the shaft mouth, and the grass has spread over a deserted dump. But when Strong started south on the twentieth day of one April, to be exact, he wondered if it were a glorified mint that waited him at the other side of the long stretch of rotten ice.

A small syndicate, of odorous reputation, was in control of the Star; and, strange to relate, dividends, large and lusty, were being regularly paid. Also there was a merchant, a transparently reputable merchant, who flung his wisdom to the winds and absorbed Morning Star shares with

reckless enthusiasm as fast as they were astutely released by the Syndicate. There are various frenzies of hate, passion, jealousy and love, but these fade into pallor beside the gambling furor which periodically seizes the Lord's elect. And when there is added to this the subtle psychological argument that it is new wealth which the distant jewellery shop is adding to the world, —wealth which impoverishes none but enriches all—you immediately have exactly such a situation as that which resulted in John Strong, undertaking to do what no man has done either before or since.

Pride brought him there, also a certain contempt for danger—the sort of indifference one has after meeting the same man day after day in the same place. It was beyond human nature to listen unmoved to the entreaties of that transparent merchant, who, suddenly roused by Strong's half concealed incredulity, began to wonder whether after all the "jewellery shop," was really as he had pictured it. He had pawed at Strong, offering huge fees for inside information. And Strong laughed, and

to finish the thing, said, "It will cost you five hundred." And then he stopped laughing, for a cheque with the still wet signature was shoved impatiently in front of him. All this and a good deal more passed through his mind as he faced south, with Tom Moore and the dog team behind him.

The snow had already left the land that paralleled him with low black slopes, and shoreward on either side lay the blank plain of ice. The air was cool, but not cold. It was full of elusive suggestions of Spring—suggestions apart from temperature or season. Tom Moore shook his head. "Kahween nesheshin!" (No good!), he grunted.

By night of the second day the caravan had covered seventy miles, and camped in a spruce thicket beside the Royal Mail. The carriers were held up—not themselves, but the mail. Personal chances are inviting and pardonable; but orders from Ottawa are flat, so the two lean weather-beaten carriers waited the widening of a water lane that already stretched like a black ribbon down the long backbone of Big Manitou.

That night the stars were soft and tremulous, hanging like melting candles in the vast sweep of the sky. Toward morning the wind came out of the south, and the moon was obscured in soft vapours—and again Tom Moore shook his head. An hour after Strong left, he looked back. The carriers had watched him start. No words were spoken, for in the woods there is small need of words. But, looking back, he saw two small pin points move slowly out from shore. The carriers were trying it.

Now, of that particular day, Strong remembers chiefly that it was like tramping over a large and spongy counterpane. The sun came up hot and clear. By noon the ice was shrinking, leaving great areas of fine needle-like points that cut the dogs' feet cruelly, and through which he splashed with his heart in his mouth. They skirted long air holes in which the water lay with that peculiar flat viscosity that water always takes when surrounded by ice. By mid-afternoon the trail was red with the dogs' butchered feet, so Tom cut the traces and they struggled ashore, and for hours followed the

fringe of forest, howling and yelping like lost spirits.

Nightfall came at Pickerel Rapids, where the Big Manitou drops into the Rainy River region. But there was a touch of frost at sundown, and Strong was too wise to sleep. At noon on the next day he picked up the rumble of the Morning Star stamp mill, which, as you will doubtless have reckoned, makes one hundred and twenty miles of bad footing, in exactly three days and a half.

There are various ways of inspecting a gold mine. There is the directors' inspection, when augustly ignorant personages smoke cigars in forbidden places, wonder why a stamp mill makes such a row, and peer dubiously up into cavernous stopes, in constant dread that a sudden contraction of the bowels of outraged earth will crush them out of recognition. There is the formal inspection by the mining expert, whose uncle has an interest in a smelter and wears a pin of quartz showing native gold. And there is that entirely different quality of inspection, when a quiet, grey-eyed, silent man drops in

suddenly from impassable regions, and, ignoring the mechanical triumphs of the mill, demands admission underground.

That was what Sharpe, the Manager of the Morning Star, felt, when he faced Strong. The Engineer was not a big man—he was under six feet, but he had an enormous width of shoulder and depth of chest. His arms were long, his flanks lean: his whole frame seemed poised for action.

Sharpe glanced past him at the half-breed. Six-feet-four towered Tom Moore, dwarfing Strong to insignificance. Only by taking him sectionally could one grasp his immensity. His face was seamed and flattened into a huge mask by exposure to many storms. There was something saturnine in his eyes. His great hands hung loose and knotted with ripples and strings of muscle, the palms and finger tips worn almost white by friction of the paddle and the pack-strap. For all his bulk he moved lightly, with the cat-like tread that pertains to big men of perfect build. Hardships had only developed in him that extraordinary strength for which

he was noted in the north. He resembled an engine—infinitely forceful, waiting the master word.

Sharpe stared at him. He had heard of Tom.

"I represent the holder of a very large number of shares," went on Strong, quietly. "Here is his letter, and in his interest I want to go underground."

"You can't," said Sharpe, with a shade of uncertainty. "It's against orders."

"Whose?"

"The President's."

"I'm sorry; because, you see, we walked a hundred and twenty miles to see the mine, and the walking was not very good. So, since the President's not here, we have to go round his orders." Strong's voice got quieter and smoother as he spoke, but there was a thin hard thread in it. Then Sharpe looked again, and got quite yellow, for the Engineer's hand rested very lightly on his hip, and from the hip pocket projected a hard, angular, and most unmistakable bulge. Furthermore, Tom Moore, who followed and understood every word, had his orders, and was

leaning slightly forward, staring at the Manager like a menacing copper basilisk.

There were perhaps fifty men at Sharpe's call, but he would have felt as helpless with five hundred. That is the cost of being at heart a craven. So they walked over to the hoist house, where Strong instilled a sudden respect into the hoistman; and, when he turned to the head gear, Tom mounted guard at the collar of the shaft, as Engineer and Manager stood on the bucket rim and dropped swiftly out of sight.

Now, the tale of that inspection is brief. Strong tramped through levels that were palpably barren, and climbed into stopes whence had been gouged the ore that paid those dazzling dividends. A burglar had looted the "jewellery shop": that was patent. Here and there were small lenses of rich stone, through which the native gold ran in wires and threads. The output might hold for a month or two; but the tale of the Morning Star was told. He poked about, hammering and sampling, in grim silence, and Sharpe saw that it was not a directors' inspection. The Manager's tricky soul faltered as each section of the Star

yielded its barrenness. When it was all over, Strong swung his sample bags into the bucket and signalled to hoist, and, as they shot to the surface, Sharpe's face was white with something other than candle grease and sludge.

It is the law of the north that friend or foe, man or beast, must not depart an hungered from camp; but when Sharpe struck into the trail for the dining room, Strong stopped dead. With the coming of darkness had come also a light frost, enough to glaze the surface of the sodden earth, and Strong remembered the shaky leagues that blinked from the northward.

"Will you eat?" said Sharpe, stiffly, thinking also, but quite differently, of those shaky leagues.

"With a fool—yes! with a liar—no!" snapped the Engineer, with a sudden riot in his stomach. "Tom! get the toboggans. Bosin!" (Let us start.)

And that was Sharpe's last impression of Strong —a shape vanishing in the gloom, the grating of the toboggans as they straightened out behind, and the "weep-weep" of the ice as it sprang under the invisible feet.

At Pickerel Rapids the Big Manitou plunges into a tortuous stream that wriggles between steep banks to an ultimate freedom in the expanse of Clear Water Lake; and at three in the morning, Strong rolled himself in a blanket and slept on a pile of cedar boughs, with the tumult of the rapids in his ears. At six, in the half light that creeps before the dawn, Tom Moore arose to make tea. Strong heard him pushing through the brushwood to the river's edge.

The woods have their own peculiar language, which he who walks may interpret—a language more pregnant with meaning than that of the most learned professor, and having, furthermore, sweet and understandable pauses and lapses, in which the minor elements of the wilderness do volubly express themselves.

It was in one of the pauses of the river's roar that Strong heard, sudden and terrible, a whimpering scream of mortal fear—a cry, poignant and unearthly. He stiffened where he lay, and his hair crept and prickled on head and neck. Now, saving the ignorance or cowardice of man, there is nothing in the woods to fear. This is the first

great lesson of woodcraft. But there was a ghastly horror in the cry that swept away all else.

Again it rose; and then a huge body catapulted toward him with crashing of small timber. Strong's hand shot out for the axe that lay beside him, and stiffened for the swing as a great hulk hurtled past —but, just as the edge was mounting to its fall, Tom plunged to the earth at his feet. "Wendigo —Wendigo" (Spirit—Spirit), he quavered, "knock pail out of my hand!"

Never before had fear vanquished the heart of Tom Moore; and, in spite of himself, a quaver crept into Strong's voice. There were tales by many an Indian fire of strange things, half-man, half-beast, that no traveller might meet and live, emissaries sent by the great Manitou himself to assert dominion over disputed realms. He laid a very heavy hand on the big breed's shoulder. "We will go and see."

At the foot of the cataract a pool widened into swirling curves. The swift black water was streaked with mounds and ribbons of curdled foam, and ringed with a fringe of ice. Above

and beyond, a mass of cedar mounted sharply, muffling the hiss of racing water in its soft green breast. A remote place, misty and memorial in the indistinction of dawn, floored with the ebony river, walled in with undying foliage, echoing with the booming cataract, roofed with the ever bending sky—a place for ghosts and breathless happenings. And that was what Strong saw; but a great grip took his arm, and a big, thick, husky voice stammered in terror, "Neshka! Neshka! ewayde." (Look! Look! over there.)

He looked, and a queer dryness came into his mouth and a weakness to his knees, for a hummock of foam was drifting toward him, and from its fleecy surface projected a human hand, with small milky bubbles clustering around the wrist like lace.

Then from the smooth and inky water came forth another hand—another right hand, he caught that much—and the two touched in silent salute as they swung past in the rocking cradle of a back eddy. Round and round, meeting and greeting, parting and waving, light of finger and

swift of motion, plucked suddenly down and as suddenly reappearing, with ghastly and fantastic gaiety. A heave of the river, and two disfigured bodies rolled into view, their scarred faces glinting at him from just beneath the streaky surface, as they lolled drunkenly on limp shoulders. "Mail carriers," whispered Tom. "Break through ice above Falls—yesterday."

It was the last trip of the Manitou mail. They had looked Strong in the face, and told him their orders were to take no risks. It was another thing to watch Strong's back as he picked a perilous way over forbidden depths. The man had over-ruled the mail carrier.

Around swung the grim circuit, and Strong stooped involuntarily and reached into this dance of death. Icy fingers slid into his own. He set his teeth against the strain of the river, tugging blindly at the shattered forms below. There was a moment when his heart contracted. He seemed to be reaching for a spirit that twisted and struggled grotesquely to escape, a spirit that pleaded with speechless, bubbling lips:—"Let me alone! I won't come back—I won't!"

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Very tenderly he drew them out and laid them side by side on a cedar bed in a cleft of the hill, and raised a barricade against the sharp-nosed people of the woods that have no fear of man when he is dead. Beside them he put the things that one finds in a man's pocket in winter in the north, and at their feet a hemlock cross, against the time when the iron-bound earth should soften to receive her own again. Then he left them to sweet, inarticulate whispering, and the sound of many waters.

All next day his mind was charged with vague and unanswerable questioning. In the silence of great spaces, the riddle of existence is very pressing. The hollow sphere of sky is pregnant with it, the voiceless solitudes hurl it at the wayfarer, dominantly and insistently. He harked back to the motionless figures on the cedar bed—was that the answer?

As night fell, the end of the Big Manitou loomed ahead with a black solidity, vastly different from the trembling sheet he traversed. And then suddenly came rain—and, behind the rain, came thunder. Instantly the whole crepitant

plain began to quiver. The shock of the startled air communicated itself to the dwindling ice. Great patches of it were fractured and disintegrated into soft and spongy areas that shook and collapsed at every step. Strong began to run swiftly toward the land—but suddenly his footing fell away, and, flinging out his arms, he hung poised and gasping in the chilling flood. Beneath him was a hundred feet of black water. "Look out! Don't come here! Bad ice!" he shouted.

But a dark figure loomed through the dusk, as Tom dropped on his belly and crawled toward him. The ice swayed and undulated beneath the weight of the huge breed, who came on with delicate and infinite caution, till he lay flat and stretched out his hands. Strong winced as they closed on him. Slowly the big man put forth his gigantic strength. Not an inch from its proneness did he raise his own body, that spread out its diffuse bulk. Through wrist and forearm alone flowed his vast force, till, as Strong was slowly drawn backward and sideways, he could hear bones and sinews cracking like whipcord under the tension of that stupendous effort.

For a few moments they lay inert, Strong's teeth chattering, the breed breathing heavily with deep-lunged reaction. Then the Engineer's hand went out and found Tom's shoulder.

"Kaygah minowah neebo" (Nearly another dead one), said Tom, thickly. "Bosin!"

At the head of the Little Manitou there is a sheltered bay that thrusts close against the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and here the camp of the mail carriers nestled on the edge of a patch of spruce. The wheat trains roared past it day and night, and between the thunder of their wheels lisped the voice of the lake along a smooth strip of shining sand. From the two cabins two Indian women peered silently day after day.

It fell on a morning when the Spring sun was beating down hard, and the woods were full of the sound of small things wakening to life, that John Strong and Tom Moore stepped silently from the screen of tangled spruce. Their clothes were torn to shreds, their hands and faces scraped and bleeding—for their trail had been where no trail was. On Strong's back was strapped the mail

bag. Across Tom's forehead lay the wide black strap of a tump-line, stretched taut with the mountain of his load. They did not speak; but Naqua, the elder of the two women, stared at Strong with the steady gaze of the forest, till she caught the leather strap of the mail bag swinging under his elbow.

Now, in the north, the mail bag is the outward and visible sign of a far distant authority. It is clothed with dignity and hedged about with suggestions of power and dominion. It is never out of sight of the carrier, and is held by him as something dearer than his honour, and more to be respected than his own life. So when Naqua saw her husband's trust borne on strange shoulders, she stared at it wonderingly, till a dreadful comprehension began to dawn in her face. "You have seen my man?" she said, quickly, with a shake in her voice.

Strong nodded; words seemed very weak just then.

"Where is he?"

"At Pickerel Rapids." His eyes, full of the burden of his message, caught her own squarely.

There was an instant, a breathless moment, in which his gaze said insistently: "He is dead—don't you understand, he is dead"—while hers thrust back bravely, flouting what it knew to be true. Then a slow agony rose in the brown depths—and Strong knew that she had guessed. "We found them below the Falls," he added, unsteadily.

And that was all he said. It was only the lifting of that veil, close to which must walk all who love and serve the north. It was the ultimate answer to the unspoken question that lay heavy in the hearts of the two women, as often as they watched the Manitou mail dwindle and vanish in the wilderness. So now that the grim answer had come at last, it was to spirits long numbed with waiting and wondering. They crouched, dry-eyed and piteous, their lips moving in soundless grief. Then slowly their aprons were drawn over the bent heads.

Strong stood silent and helpless. He had been very close to the edge of things, but the memory of it faded before this epitome of sorrow. Something moved him to a vast revolt against the

inflexibility of fate—the grim cruelty of life. The roar of a wheat train reached him, and he turned mechanically into the worn trail that led from the cabins to the flag station.

But, reaching the edge of the bush, he stopped, thoughtfully retraced his steps, and stood beside the shapeless figure of the elder woman. Then, slowly unscrewing a safety box, he took from it a strip of pink paper, and pushed it gently between the brown, clenched fingers. "Give it to the Hudson Bay factor," he said, in Indian; "there is enough for two."

An hour later he leaned over the counter in the telegraph office. "Get this through to Montreal."

The operator glanced at Strong, but met something that stifled a pardonable desire for gossip. Then he read: — "Mine - exhausted-manager - crooked - take - loss - and - get - out - please-instruct - bank - accept - endorsement - Naqua - on-cheque-made-payable-to-me-John-Strong."

CONSECRATED GROUND

THE CALL

Turn ye again, my people, turn ;
Enter my palace wild and rude,
And cheerly let your camp-fires burn
Throughout my scented solitude.

The glare, the tumult, and the stress
Are gone with yesterday, and we
Are children of the wilderness,
Of wonder and of mystery.

Mark how the tilted mountains lie
Mantled with moss and cloistered fir :—
My brother, canst thou pass them by,
Art thou not, too, a worshipper ?

The long lake wrinkling in the wind,
The breathless wood, and, over all,
Through tangled underbrush entwined,
The riot of a waterfall.

The multitudinous sounds that blend
In one vast stillness void of sound,
A slumber too divine to end,
Interminable and profound.

Close to the bosom undefiled
Of her who bore mankind I press,
Receiving like a wandering child,
Her inarticulate caress.

CONSECRATED GROUND

The Musselburgh links march beside the Firth from Eskmouth eastwards, and on the West the ancient town pulls itself up sharply against long, green undulations of close, velvety turf.

> "Musselborough was a borough when Edinboro was nane,
> Musselborough will be a borough when Edinboro's gane."

So ran the old saying, and every time-worn cobble-paved lane in the old fishing village seemed to testify to its probable truth.

The mother of Jamie Peters got her fish at Portobello, packed them in a creel and carried them four miles to Edinboro. All day her "Caller herrin" shrilled out, till at dusk she tramped back six miles to Musselburgh with a few shillings clinking cheerfully in some remote receptacle of her short voluminous skirts. But Jamie's earliest memories were not of fish, they were of the links. By the time he was three

he had learned to keep his eye on the ball. At the age of five he could follow through and hit clean, and ere he was nine he was a caddy.

He started wisely and took golf seriously, and, as the years passed, soaked in all the concentrated wisdom of that historic course. There was something about the sharp click of a good drive that got into his blood, and when he saw old Tom Morris tee his ball on his old-fashioned watch and lift it over the grand-stand with a full iron swing, golf became something more than a game or even a ceremonial.

It was a May day with a west wind whipping the Firth into life when Jamie left for the first hole exactly six steps behind the Honourable John Selkirk. The Honourable John was playing his friend the Bishop of Edinboro, and his thick-set calves in their coarse home-spun casings were matched, if not shamed, by the sturdy shanks that swelled beneath the episcopal gaiters.

"Ye'll be pullin' this a little I'm thinking,"

said Jamie, thrusting a brassie into the hands of the Honourable John. "The wind's i' the west."

But Selkirk did not pull. He sliced—sliced horribly. His ball leaped the low fence and lay in a rut by the roadside. "What about that?" he said and looked at Jamie.

Jamie was disgusted, more—he was hurt.

"I've seen waur, Sir, but no muckle waur. We'll take the iron noo."

Some kinder fate smiled on Selkirk. He lifted the ball with a clean sharp snoop straight for the green, where it dropped, rolled a foot or two and lay dead.

"Yon's no so bad," said Jamie, with evident relief. "The Bishop's i' the bunker."

Selkirk looked back. Angus Edinboro was engaged in ecclesiastical excavations. His niblick rose and fell viciously. His black-coated body was obscured by clouds of sand, through which could be distinguished a clerical expression devoid of any appearance of sanctity, "Jamie, I've always pitied a Bishop because he cannot swear," he said mirthfully

"Wha says that? Ye've never caddied for a Bishop. Take the hole. He's picked up."

Half way round the course the Bishop's serenity was restored, he was one up. "Where's your son now, Selkirk?"

There was a moment's pause. Selkirk frowned slightly, and addressed his ball. It was not like the Bishop to talk so inopportunely. His vexation infused itself into the stroke and he topped his drive.

"Damn—my son's in Canada, somewhere in the north, and I beg your pardon, Sir."

The Bishop stiffened slightly then relaxed into a smile, "I'm sorry, Selkirk. It was quite unpardonable," he said, and drove straight into another bunker. "I feel inclined to ask you as a layman to make the appropriate remark," he added ruefully.

At the eighth hole, Selkirk was two up and one to play. He was talking freely about Canada, and Jamie was close up on his heels, sucking it in. The mere distances gave him a queer sensation. Once only had he been as far as Corstorphine to see the games, twelve

miles of travel in his twenty-five years. Then Selkirk told about the big trout in the Nepigon River, that falls into Lake Superior. There were sea trout in the Esk, where it split Musselburgh in halves, that is if the overflow from the gas works was not too great and the dye-stuffs from the mills higher up were not too poisonous. Jamie had whipped the Esk till he was tired, but this sounded differently.

The Honourable John lost the last hole by missing a three foot put, but Jamie was too absorbed in new reflections to care. "Selkirk was going to Canada to join his son—would he —would he?"

"Ye'll no be needin' a caddie ower there," he said tentatively an hour later, depositing a bag of burnished clubs.

Selkirk shook his head with a smile. "No lad, no; but would you be leaving Musselburgh?"

Jamie cast a thoughtful eye about him. To the west lay the grey club house, its front dotted with men in bright red coats, southward rose the bleak grandstand, past which the Musselburgh races annually ploughed their deliberate course.

Eastward rolled the smooth lift of the links, and beyond all slept the misty undulations of the Pentlands. It was all fine, just fine, but he was suddenly tired of it. "I'll dae anything ye like if ye'll tak me," he said pleadingly, digging his toe into the turf, from which crime he would have shrunk in a normal mood.

Selkirk looked at him seriously; as it happened he wanted a man. Jamie would make an excellent servant, there was no doubt of that, and his pawkiness had often been balm to Selkirk's soul. "I'll think it over," he said, scanning the freckled face. "You'll hear from me the day after to-morrow."

"I' the morn's morn," replied Jamie quickly.

"Yes lad—i' the morn's morn."

Affairs progressed quickly for once in Midlothian. A month later Jamie stood amid a crowd of second-class passengers, staring at the Laurentians as the Huronic steamed up the Gulf of St Lawrence. He was trying hard to adjust himself. He had been travelling for a week and this was the first time he had reached anything. That, in itself, was difficult to comprehend. The home

ties that promised to be so hard to break, had slipped from him like his old golfing coat. But most wonderful of all was the way his mother took it. Selkirk's letter arrived as promised on the morn's morn. He read it, swallowed an unaccustomed lump and turned to his mother, "Mither, I'm ganging tae America wi' Mr Selkirk."

His mother was cleaning fish. She finished her fish, and then stared at him. "When are ye gangin, lad?"

"The week's end, forbye it's no sooner."

The fish-wife put down her knife and rubbed her hard frosty face. A herring scale stuck there and that was Jamie's best memory of his mother, with a strange look in her eye and the herring scale glinting like silver on her cheek. "Wull ye promise me one thing, Jamie?"

"I wull, mither."

"If anything haps tae ye, ye'll be burrit in consecrated ground?"

Jamie fingered the new one-pound Scotch notes in his pocket, for Selkirk had sent him wherewith to equip himself. It gave a cheerful sense of

independence. Nothing could happen to a man with sixty shillings in his trews. "Aye, mither, I promise."

And that was about all there had been to it, just in the manner of hard, angular people, who, having depth of affection stowed away somewhere, would never reveal it, for be it known that the Scotch may express sentiment for their country, but rarely for each other.

The Honourable John bore letters to George Simpson, chief factor of the Hudsons Bay Company, and while Jamie waited in the big anteroom at the head office in Montreal, he could almost have sworn he was back in Scotland again. From all around came the lift of his native tongue —the smooth sibilant accents of the Highlander, the soft inflections of the Lothian lad, the choleric abruptness of a Glasgow clerk, and the rasp of the Hebrides. It was a wise man who ordained that the Scotch should be the backbone of the H. B. C., for it has never broken.

"We will go to Prince Arthur's Landing to meet my son," said Selkirk, returning from his

interview with the factor, "and then we will fish the Nepigon."

Now, of that journey and of the pink and red trout in the icy waters of the Nepigon, is it not written in Jamie's letters, letters that were thumbed and borrowed, read and reread, till something of the fury of the chase filtered into half the caddies on Musselburgh links. Angus Edinboro caught something of it when he overheard a shock-headed boy mutter scathingly, "A pound of fush tae an ounce of rod! Well, ye ken what Jamie is." But all the time the ancient Celt was awaking in the wanderer. He was responding like a questing hound to the call of the wilderness. Something in him became alive and he revolted at the prospect of Selkirk's return, at exchanging cataracts and great spaces and pine-tossed skyline for the primness of Musselburgh links and the ordered life of old.

Selkirk was an understanding man. Jamie admitted that when he stood in front of his master digging his toe, this time into the moss, and seeking for words wherewith to excuse himself. "I'll come if ye say so, Maister

John; but dinna tak me if ye dinna need me."

"And what would you be doing?" said Selkirk, looking at him as he did that day in Musselburgh, three months ago.

Jamie swung his arm eloquently. Behind him the river, split by a rocky pinnacle, rushed by in twin torrents of thunderous foam. All around him the forest marched to its brink, and the air was full of sweet tumult and the unfathomed mystery of untenanted places. "It's yon," he almost whispered. "It's got me and I would'na leave it."

There was that in Selkirk which moved in response. He knew it and felt it too, this call that summoned so many of his countrymen to lonely lodges. And Jamie would go like the rest, till by and by, with an Indian wife, he would rear a family of the finest men that ever threaded any wilderness, a family of Scotch half-breeds. So it came that Selkirk in another month had another round with the Bishop on the Musselburgh links, while Jamie went north with a party that headed for Fort Albany on the Hudsons Bay.

It was at the end of August that the white stockade of the Fort faded behind him, as he stood on the deck of a trading schooner bound for Fort Churchill, still further north. The call was getting very clear now. In his quiet dogged way he was doing his best to answer. The barren lands stretched ahead, naked and forlorn—a country sheared of ease and comfort and delight. And ever as the barrenness increased, Jamie's soul stripped away the shell that encased it and came forth nakedly to meet it. The Musselburgh caddy was wiped clean out of him, he had become the primordial Celt.

Macdougall was in charge on the Albany, and there was also Suggemah, the Mosquito, an Ojibway interpreter. Into their circle dropped Jamie, welcome as the grey goose, herald of summer in the barren lands. Macdougall held close to the Kirk, but Suggemah was a heathen. Evening after evening had the trader hammered at the inflexible Indian, till by now he was on the fourth round of arguments that apparently dissolved in the smoke that shot in quick little puffs from the copper-coloured face.

"Your God cannot speak," said Suggemah stolidly, "but I hear my Manitou in the wind and the water. Shall I leave a god who has a voice for one that is silent?" And that was how it always ended.

As for the rest, Suggemah opened himself to Jamie, till the lad read in him the inherited forest wisdom of the ages. When the snows came, the two went oft together for days, and the lad saw exhibited all the marvellous unwritten skill of the red man in the wilderness. But it is particularly of Jamie's last day at Fort Churchill, the first day of the new year, that you must read.

How it happened, Suggemah could never tell, because he did not see it. Jamie was shooting ptarmigan with Macdougall's muzzle loader, his freckled cheek laid close against the gun stock, his grey eye glancing sharply along the brown barrel. Suddenly there was a report so strangely unlike the sound of Macdougall's gun that Suggemah came running across the ridge. Face down on the snow stretched Jamie, and beside him the muzzle loader, with shattered breech.

For a day and a night he lay babbling, unrespon-

sive to all that Macdougall or Suggemah could do. As the end drew near he talked of many things, talked ceaselessly in a thin, cracked, high-pitched voice. Just before the very end he grew strangely quiet and looked up with one parting flicker of reason. His mind had tottered back to Musselburgh, to the day he had given Selkirk's letter to his mother. "Hae ye ony consecrated ground here?" he whispered painfully.

"Not here, laddie, at York Factory, but not here," whispered back Macdougall.

"Wull-ye-bury-me-there?" He forced it out with difficulty for things were growing dark again. "I promised ma mither."

For an instant Macdougall hesitated. To York Factory was one hundred and sixty miles across the Bay ice. Jamie caught his indecision and an extremity of pleading rushed into his eyes. "Promise," he said weakly, "promise, for ma mither."

"I promise, laddie, I promise," replied the factor firmly. "Sleep, laddie, sleep." Then Jamie turned on his side, smiled happily, and the rest was silence.

The York Factory trail follows the shore forty miles to Cape Churchill and swings with it due south for another hundred and twenty. Suggemah called it four days with fair going, and for the first day he broke trail. After him came a dog team with sleeping bags and provisions, then another toboggan with the rigid body of Jamie. The weather was clear and hard. On their right lifted the stark hills that rimmed this section of the great Bay, while, beyond, the wind-whipped ice widened into the speechless north. In these latitudes, in the winter, words are few. At four o'clock the little caravan turned landward for the night's shelter. At five camp was made in the lee of a titanic fragment of the overhanging bluff. A hundred yards away, higher up on the gaunt hillside, rested the shapeless form on the toboggan.

The night fell black and cheerless. A wind whined out of the north. . It picked up little rifts and flurries of snow and drove them dancing southwards like wraiths in the gloom. The dogs curled tighter in the circular beds that ere morning would sink into pits with the warmth of their

sturdy bodies. Close beside the red embers of the fire were the sleeping bags of Macdougall and Suggemah. Within them slumbered those weary with the weight of the trail.

One hour, two hours, passed. A dog's forehead wrinkled and a pair of black ears twitched sharply erect. Then the grey head lifted, the wolfish eyes blinked, and the nostrils quivered and expanded. Sleep had vanished with a sense of something strange. In another instant his muzzle went up, his jaw dropped showing its white fangs, and there thrilled out one long desolate howl into the night, the howl of fear and terror. On the instant seven other fierce protests joined the clamour, and the air was split with an inferno of sound.

The sleeping bags stirred, and from them two faces stared toward the dogs. Macdougall's arm shot out and his grip closed on the rifle that lay beside him. Then, suddenly, the sound ceased and dropped into an abyss of silence, in which he could hear the dogs panting. Through a hollow in the wind came a cry. It thrilled out with a wild appeal of one in mortal agony, who flings his

last breath into a piteous scream for help. It was the voice of a man, yet not of a man. It was human, but it came from where no man was. Macdougall felt his heart contract, and prickly fear ran over his skin. Again it rose straight from the darkness, where the toboggan rested beneath its motionless freight. "Help, help." In hoarse horror it assailed him out of the gloom.

The rifle shook in Macdougall's hands, but he crawled out of his fur robes. Suggemah had turned a ghastly pallid yellow, but he, too, rose, and followed, with his gun stock at half shoulder height, its muzzle pitched forward and his finger on the trigger.

The factor's knees knocked as he moved slowly through the deep snow. Then out of the gloom ahead came a sound of soft large movements and scuffling. He drew a little nearer. The barrel of his rifle described uncertain little circles, but he held it as steadily as might be toward the sound. In another moment something large and shapeless rose in front and two great arms thrust out toward him. On the instant Suggemah fired from behind him. There came back a choking

cough and at that moment the moon slid from the shroud of clouds that had enveloped it.

In the half light a great she-bear wallowed in the snow, and, where it rolled, crimson patches lay dark. Close beside was the toboggan, overturned. Beneath it, the body of Jamie lay twisted and distorted. One arm was extended, torn from its swathing, and the stiff white fingers curled inward toward the rigid palm. His face was bare, his mouth was open as if for speech, and on the dead face was frozen an agony of fear.

The great beast choked its life out in a red flood. The moonlight came clear and Macdougall, whose features had grown suddenly old and grey, stood peering down at the still face. Then he turned to Suggemah, and his voice shook, "Who called?"

But Suggemah only rolled his black eyes from Jamie to the bear, from the bear to factor, till the whites of them shone oily and lustrous.

"Who called?" said Macdougall again. His tone was pitched high in a whimpering quaver; he had just met with fear for the first time.

Suggemah shook his head. There were tales

abroad of a Thing that walked by night on the shores of the Bay, a Thing that no man might meet and live. Perhaps—he stooped over Jamie, delicately replaced the torn wrappings and laid the out-stretched arm straight again. "I do not know," he said simply. "Now I wait here."

Morning came with leaden feet and again the dog train furrowed its way southward. Behind them the wind smoothed out their tracks as the water closes in to obliterate the wake of a ship. So passed the day in silence and wonderings of what the night would bring. But on that night and the next there came no message from the dead, and then there was but one day's journey left to consecrated ground.

There is an ominous hour that heralds the dawn. Macdougall shivered beneath the weight of it as he lay sleepless with burning eyes. His brain had turned in on itself with vain imaginings. In these great spaces the mind of man is very naked. There is nothing to cloak it from the cycle of the mysterious processes of nature, for not only is life itself primal, but death tramps the trail till his face is familiar from many en-

counters. Now, however, Macdougall felt that something that lay between himself and the world of ghosts had been ripped away, and he could almost put out his hand in the dark and touch that which was not of earth.

In that hour it came again, the ghostly unearthly wail for help, but this time wilder, more agonized than before. He knew it was coming, a sharp shrinking of his spirit warned his body to summon all its powers in the darkness. But his heavy limbs revolted from their duty. His heart moved on, but behind dragged that physical part of him which was riven with unutterable horror. Strive as he would he could only crawl toward the sound. Then past him glided Suggemah, very smoothly, very swiftly. The Indian's eyes were flashing, he seemed animated by some superb infusion of courage.

His figure vanished into the scant timber where rested the toboggan. A sound of locking jaws and tearing of cloth made Macdougall feel suddenly sick. Then the sharp crack of a rifle, and silence, broken only by the snapping of twigs as something raced inland through the underbrush.

When Macdougall reached him, Suggemah was stooping over the body. Again it wore that agony of fear. "Wolf," he said.

Day broke clear and hard as the two set forth. There was no need for speech. A dumb blind burden of oppression had fallen over them. They could do nothing but tramp doggedly on with quick glances at the shore line, where the hills were already smoothing out toward York Factory. Through the brain of each moved a dead wonderment, enveloping thought and spirit alike in a choking mystifying fog. It was hard to breathe. It seemed astonishing that they should ever have been able to laugh—they could never laugh again.

At York Factory was Missionary Simpson, who wore the only black coat in a hundred thousand square miles of wilderness. Macdougall had never thought much of missionaries before, but he experienced a strange slackness of relief at the sight of this man of faith. He felt allied at last to some one who could deal with his own spiritual extremity.

At sundown on the next day, Simpson stood on consecrated ground. With him were the two

brothers of the trail, and a gathering of silent men looking wonderingly at everything except that which lay directly in front of them. Simpson turned to the magnificent ceremonial with which the Church of England bids farewell to her children, and read on with steady voice. Suddenly Macdougall looked up. "If, after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts." What did Simpson mean by that? He racked himself for an answer. Again came Simpson's voice. "Behold I show you a mystery." He waited expectantly, for mystery had him in its grip. "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain." That was it—thank God, that was it.

He had a quick sensing as if something that bound him tight were being cut away. The strangling weight that had choked him since those first mysterious cries came through the night was lifted. He took his first long deep free breath, and the hot blood went pumping strongly through him.

The same change came over Suggemah. The Indian stood erect, his black eyes fixed unswervingly on the missionary. On his face was written

a great resolution. The brief service ended, and he spoke, quietly, slowly, but with something in his tones that Macdougall had never heard before.

"I have heard the message of your Manitou. Four nights ago it came, but I did not understand. Two nights ago it came again, and I began to understand. My Manitou speaks in the water and the wind, but yours can give a voice to the dead. I, Suggemah, am now his servant."

And was it not strange that at that identical moment, the Bishop, who was having a morning round at Musselburgh, should pause as he was settling himself to drive, and remark thoughtfully, "I say, Selkirk, have you never heard from that caddy you took to Canada with you?"

THE BUSH FIRE

Night fell ; there was no sign of rain :
Day broke ; the sweltering day again :
Then, with the light, a scorching wind
And a grey wall driving close behind ;
A thick grey wall that, mounting, spread
Like a vast blanket overhead.
It blotted out the breathless sky,
Veiling the woods ; where, deep and dry,
Dead brush, dead leaves, dead branches lay
Like tinder strewn. From far away
Through the invisible chaos came
A crackling monotone of flame.
Fanned by the torrid blast it swept
Red footed ; onward, upward leapt,
Cleaving with quick and licking tongue
The cloud that o'er its furnace hung.
Then plaintive cries and whimperings
Of dumb and terror stricken things,
A stumbling, maimed and blistered tide,
Hunter and hunted side by side ;
And, winnowing the acrid air,
Lost birds were calling everywhere.

THE BUSH FIRE

JOHN STRONG, C.E., rammed his face up against the eye piece of his transit, and peered impatiently down the line. Half a mile away, at the end of the curve, a man straddled the track, balancing an iron shod picket. Strong's left arm went out. The picket wavered.

A faint blue cloud gathered along the right of way and shifted toward the instrument. "Damn the smoke," said Strong, and peered again.

The picket had vanished. He was looking into a nebula of twisting wreaths. They loitered delicately across the hundred foot lane of clearing, curled lazily around the raw stumps, and crawled sleepily along the ragged edge of forest that marched unbroken for a thousand miles. He sucked in the acrid smell through expanded nostrils. "This time—most certainly this time," he said to himself, picking up the transit and dropping it like a golf club across his shoulder. The rod man's

figure jumped up at him through rapidly increasing fog. "Come on," said Strong, "there's water at the siding."

An hour later a nervous operator, at flag station No. 17, was rapping out the call for the divisional point at Bisco. The wire was bad. Presently Bisco came on with a peremptory click. "Number-three-passenger-special-left-nine-fifteen-trestle-on-fire-mile-eight-one-four-stop-her-Jenkins-Division-Supt.-repeat."

The operator received with cigarette stained fingers that trembled over the tilting keys—"Get busy"—they rapped. Then he looked up and saw Strong.

The Engineer, leaning over the rough counter, had got it click by click. Peters knew that, but shoved out the yellow sheet scrawled with his own jerky handwriting. He began to feel unusually lonely, and it was good to have someone there.

"Where is she now?" said Strong.

Peters turned to his key and tapped out a call, waited, and called again; but all he got was the hum of the rising winds that

sang through the wires. Bisco was silent. No. 16, the nearest flag station, was inert. Fifteen gave no answer. "I can't get 'em—any of 'em," he said desperately. "Say, what am I going to do?" Peters had a yellow streak in him. It may have been cigarettes, or perhaps it was the reflex of the vast loneliness that for a year had swallowed up his insignificant person. The impassive Strong suddenly loomed up as the only way out of a box that in a flash had grown too tight.

"Batteries?" queried Strong.

The batteries tested up with a vicious snap. Peters fingers were very shaky, but he proved that, absolutely. The office door swung slowly open, and the pungency of the pale blue atmosphere sharpened. "Where's your velocipede?" demanded Strong.

Flag station 17 was at mile 827, sixty miles from Bisco. No. 3 had left Bisco at 9.15. She would strike the trestle at 10.30—if—he looked at his watch, then at Peters. "No. 3 has got to be stopped—keep on that wire, and if you can get the wrecking crew

up here, get 'em—and lend me a blanket, will you?"

The railway velocipede as a means of locomotion follows after the steam shovel and precedes the Pullman. It has two wheels beneath a wooden frame on one rail, and an outrigger to another wheel on the other rail. It is propelled by man power, and its speed varies with the man. Strong gripped the lever handles and grinned at Peters—"There's three feet of water in the borrow pit round the curve—that is, if you should happen to want it," he added, quizzically, and sent the weight of his shoulders forward.

The Flag Station dropped behind, the velocipede rattled over the switch points, and Strong breathed deeply and thought hard. To the southward, whence came the wind, lay the gold country. A thousand men were pushing through its tangled fastness, stripping the deep green moss from the ribs of earth, and waking mysterious echoes with the boom of dynamite. Of them was born the fire. It had crept away beneath dead logs and dry rootlets and the tinder-like mattress of

dead leaves, till it revealed the jointed rocks, seamed and banded with fissures and ribbons of quartz.

Strong looked southward and set his teeth. The sky was blurred and overcast with yellowish grey vapour. The sun hung like a menacing globe of strange hue, adding its heat to that of the parched earth. The air was full of small, sharp smells: the pungency of them cut his throat and nostrils. Knobs of bare and torrid granite shouldered out of the tangled bush, and stood here and there in shaven nakedness along the right of way. On each side ran the ditch, with patches of green scum-covered water shrinking from its baked banks. He could see a mile, and then not at all. The woods around him were alive with cracking, as heavy beasts shouldered along, not yet daring to have the open.

He breathed more and more deeply, sending all the weight of his great back and stomach muscles into the long oscillations of the driving lever. His arms he used not at all, except to hold on with. At the fourth mile he saw distant fire—a flicker of pink that licked the belly of

a grey bank of smoke. At the sixth he was wet with sweat, that trickled into his eyes and fought acidly with the smoke. At the big cut, a moose lumbered down the bank, stopped to stare at him, and then trotted along in front of the velocipede, his long flanks plastered with dried mud and patches of old and matted hair. At the eighth he struck the crest of the two per cent. grade that he had, as a maintenance engineer, cursed fervently for the past month; but now the long slope fell away in front, and the velocipede swayed lightly and giddily over the crowding rail heads.

At the foot of the grade a hundred cords of firewood, within throwing distance from a locomotive tender, were blazing merrily. Beside it the ties were already smouldering, and the rails expanding till the fish plates lifted irregularly. "By God!" said Strong grimly, and shut his eyes as the heat struck them.

He came out at the other end choking, his right arm blistered white, his hair singed, and the leg of his trousers on fire. At the end of the grade was a swamp, and here for one precious

moment he stopped to plunge into a slimy patch of morass. Then he soaked the blanket, and laid it over his legs.

By mile 815 the woods were ablaze on both sides, and the right of way was like a terrified menagerie. Fear of the unknown had spread abroad in the forest. Hair, fur and feather went wild. Rabbits with scorched feet ran round in circles. Partridges shot like bullets through the long red wall and fell crumpled on the track. Every pool was trampled to mud with the stamping of cloven feet. And through it all raced Strong, his heart pumping and gulping, as if hot and clotted blood were drowning its labouring valves.

The wind shifted, hesitated, and dropped. There was a moment in which everything seemed to stop and take one long, tremulous breath. Then the wind came again; but in that blessed space the right of way broadened out into a bare plain, which previous fires had licked clean of everything that would burn—and on the other side glinted the trestle. Strong leaned over as the roar of it came up through his clicking wheels,

and gazed far down to the creek bed. There was no fire here—yet.

At the end of the trestle was the big rock cut. He rattled into it, and as the clamour of his car clashed back from its jagged sides, he caught the rumble of No. 3 come wisping along the rails. He tried to get off, but his muscles refused obedience. Bone and sinew alike were wedded to the long sweep of the lever. A black mass loomed above him, and he heard the locking grip of brake shoes as the drivers bit. Then, with the nose of her pilot touching his outrigger, the locomotive of No. 3 stopped dead, with the staccato panting of her compressor drowned in the roar of her lifting safety valve.

Again Strong tried to let go, but his fingers would not release the handles. Men climbed down out of the cab, and he sat and stared at them with smoke-rimmed eyes. His coat hung in long, smouldering shreds. The blanket had fallen away, and the white skin of his legs was blackened and patched with angry stains. The human smell of him came out strongly with the taint of scorched hair and clothing. Then he

suddenly felt sick and shut his eyes; but the lids were cracked and seared like acid.

"Is the trestle safe?" he heard someone say.

Strong nodded.

The voice came back like a voice from very far off—"And the other side?"

"Hell," whispered Strong, and fainted away.

THE DEFIANCE OF NA-QUAPE

The white man spoke to the red man in the midst of the red man's land,
And said, "I came from you don't know where to help you to understand,
That the sweep of the lifting prairie that rolls from your dark teepee
With game and feather and hide and fur—they all belong to me."

The red man answered the white man, "I know the north wind's call
And the trail of the trampling buffalo, but I know not you at all:
My father's father hunted here, ere my fighting men were young,
Whose knives are sharpened to make reply to a strange and crooked tongue."

THE DEFIANCE OF NA-QUAPE

THERE was no particular reason why Blantyre should have left his father's place in Essex, except that, being a younger son, he was like a fifth wheel to the parental coach; but the only reason for his filling a post in the Indian department at Ottawa was that he had a great name behind him, and also, perhaps, because the commissioner had memories of Essex. But Blantyre brought to Canada such a lofty uninterest in the method by which most men earn their living that he was shunted from Ottawa to Winnipeg, and from Winnipeg to the prairie country south of Regina, and here his luck changed.

Mackintosh was on his way west to make treaty with the Fort Pelly Indians—Mackintosh, who knew more about the prairie men and could speak more red languages than any one out of the Hudson's Bay Company. Also Mackintosh knew more of English history, it being his hobby, than

any man in Canada. So when he heard that a son of so great a family was within a hundred miles, he sent for Blantyre. The two struck up a queer, disjointed friendship. Mackintosh saw in the shiftless nobleman, the representative, however unworthy, of ancient glories; and Blantyre, having received not a few hard knocks, had learned to recognize a strong man when he saw one. Thus the two journeyed west in official ease and comfort. Then the unexpected happened; and, one evening, the Scotchman walked into the camp with his four fingers dangling from the palm of one hand, and a gun with a shattered breech in the other. When it was bound up by the Sergeant and Joe Greensky, the interpreter for Fort Good Hope, he turned to Blantyre.

"Ye must go on," he said quietly. "I'm for Regina to get the powder out of me; but you're my deputy and the Queen's man. Ye'll no' force them, ye mind, but ca' canny, for they're kittle cattle. I told ye enough before this, an' it was well that I told ye."

Blantyre stared at him. "But, I say——"

"Ye'll no' say much if ye take my advice. Go on an' serve your country. Man alive, it's the chance of your life."

He swung, white-faced, into the saddle, for fire was shooting up his arm and plucking at the shoulder sinews. Then, a private behind him with a pack horse, he rode off for Regina.

Two weeks later, it was told among the Wood Saulteaux that the servant of the White Queen was coming to make treaty, and the news ran till it spread to the camp of Na-quape, the Wild One, in the Nut Lake country, north-west of Fort Pelly; and when Bel-agisti, the Left-handed, Na-quape's oldest wife, heard it, she laughed viciously, and scraped the harder at a deerskin across her knees.

But Na-quape called council, and, to the surprise of the elder men, said that, though he hated the whites, this time he would go to hear what might be said. Then he painted his face and trailed across the prairie with his wise men, O-soop, the Wanderer, and Min-gan, the Spotted Wolf, and his fifty fighting men and their women at a labouring and respectful

distance, to where Blantyre's camp shone white in the green immensity of the wilderness.

The Sergeant had, so far as he could, taken Blantyre under a red-coated wing, for had he not served under an uncle of the great family in Afghanistan, who rode hard and swore hard and fought hard, and who had just such a drawl as that which slipped so languidly through Blantyre's tawny moustache.

So, when Na-quape arrived, he found the deputy's tent open, with the deputy sitting at a folding table in front of it. He found the three mounted police standing on one side, with the flag on the other, and, in the rear, the canvas habitation of a nomadic trader, who had use for all the treaty money in Blantyre's sack.

Blantyre saw a straight, immobile, copper-coloured statue. Around his forehead was a band of marten fur, from which the black, feather-crowned hair fell away in two long oiled and shining plaits. Little brass discs dangled beside his face, and his body was bright with shirt and leggings of vivid blankets.

About his neck a skinning knife hung in an embroidered sheath, and in his belt stuck the heavy handle of a great buffalo knife with a ten-inch blade; and last there was the muzzle-loader, with its barrel sawn off short. Thus, in freedom, stood Na-quape, and at a wave of his hand, the fighting men settled behind him in a semicircle on the grass.

Very slowly he opened the fire bag that had once been the lower mandible of a crane, and drew from it steel and flint and touchwood and tobacco.

"I say," put in Blantyre suddenly.

Na-quape lifted his dark eyes: "When I am ready I will speak," he said slowly. Then a fighting man brought and filled the great soapstone puagun, the pipe with its yard-long stem and strange, straight bowl, that had been handed down from father to son for more years than even the oldest of them knew.

Blantyre moved restlessly while it passed silently from lip to lip, and opened his eyes wider, for Na-quape was holding the mouth-piece towards him.

The pipe was very old, and, without question, very dirty; and Blantyre's lips, that clung so tenaciously to his brier, lifted instinctively. He could not guess that he was asked to share in a ceremonial that was pregnant with meaning to every red man. He only knew that the thing was to him unspeakably filthy, and, just as he was about to imperil the life of every white settler in the country, the Sergeant whispered: "Take it, sir, for God's sake take it!"

So the deputy took it and drew a whiff of acrid smoke, while tense sinews relaxed and invisible short guns were laid softly down beneath draped blankets by the silent semicircle on the grass.

Then Na-quape, speaking to Joe Greensky, held his luminous gaze on Blantyre, and said: "It is well that you smoked, but you sent for me as you send for a dog. You may be a great man from far off, but am I not a great man in my own country? So—speak."

Blantyre began wrong. There was no question about that, and the Sergeant saw it: "Don't be foolish," he said petulantly. "I represent the

great White Queen, whose servants we are. The land is hers, and——"

Na-quape waved a magnificent arm. "You say this land is hers?"

Blantyre nodded. He was getting very impatient. He was full of ancestral conceptions of Kafirs and Hindoos, and it did not appear seemly that this heathen should have so much to say. He saw no reason to distinguish between brown and black and red men. He was racially colour blind.

"Look here, Na-quape, or whatever your name is," he said sharply: "Either you take treaty or you don't." Joe Greensky turned to stare at him round-eyed; but he blundered on: "If you take it, you will be well looked after. Money and reserves of your own, and all that sort of thing; and if you don't, look out for yourself."

He settled back in his chair angrily and waited for the interpreter; but the whole Indian department could not have made the French half-breed render that speech, so he stammered and stuck. And into the gap came Na-quape, very quiet, very lofty, but with a thin thread of passion in his voice

that ran through the semicircle like quicksilver. "Am I a child that you speak thus? Who gave the White Queen this land? My father's father hunted here, and his father before him."

Then Blantyre, with a dawning comprehension of what manner of man he addressed, said carefully: "The Queen is our mother." And, hesitating a little, and wondering how Mackintosh would have put it. "She loves you. We are her messengers, and we obey."

"Are you finished?" answered Na-quape.

"Yes. Speak."

Then Na-quape drew himself up and folded his arms, and thundered: "My answer is 'No.' I hate you, and I hate all white men, but you are safe with the redcoats. If I came to your country where you were a free man, and said: 'I will take it and give you in return the value of one beaver skin a year,' what would you say to me?"

There was a long pause, and the Sergeant stooped over Blantyre: "Smooth him down, Sir, smooth him down. There are too few of us for this game. Say something, quick." But Blantyre's temper had the better of him, and

he got up, facing the hook-nosed, contemptuous chief. "I'm not here to talk rubbish."

The words snapped out viciously, needing no interpreter. Na-quape caught them. The fighting men half rose, and old Bel-agisti ran forward plucking at Na-quape's robe. Blantyre was brave, there was no question of that, and, oblivious to Na-quape and his warriors, he added angrily: "I do not deal with women."

Greensky caught the words and snapped them over, because he knew that Bel-agisti had cursed him for a renegade the year before at Fort Pelly.

"You tell me you do not deal with women," snarled Na-quape, "and yet you are the messenger of a Queen. You give me crooked words. Here is my answer." His great buffalo knife flashed out and up, and Blantyre held his breath. Then it came down, the point clean through the table. The short gun clattered to the ground, and Na-quape held out empty hands: "I will not take treaty. Now, if you dare, arrest me and bring me to the redcoats' camp in Regina."

In the tense silence that followed, the two

stared hard at each other, the nobleman of the East and this prince of the West, each spurred on by pride and kinship, and all that had gone before him. Na-quape's ancestors had roamed the prairies, knowing no man's law but their own, a thousand years before Blantyre's progenitors rose from the Saxon ruck and faced King John at Runnymede. By custom and order and tribal law and the passage of countless unhampered seasons they were free men, more free than the otter and lynx and buffalo that perished at their hands, and behind were those ready to strike at the crooking of a finger.

And opposite was Blantyre, who, conscious of something that had risen in him for the first time in all his haphazard life, saw himself for once as the representative of a conquering race. A slow, bulldog fury was beginning to burn in the mind that had so long put aside duty, or any thought of that noble service by which far ends of the earth have been administered for centuries by nameless Englishmen. And, just as the storm was breaking, the Sergeant edged his way in between the two, and spoke with the hard-won

wisdom of the ranks: "Flour, Sir, bacon, sugar. Give 'em anything, but give 'em something."

Blantyre brought himself up short. He *had* forgotten something to the stranger in his house; and it was not so much danger which, half guessing, he did not fear, as a sudden shamed sense of hospitality forgotten. "I say," he drawled, "will you have some tea?"

Greensky shot the words over. He could say that with pleasure, and threw in a personal compliment to Na-quape that slipped uncomprehended past the others, but touched the frowning chief in the psychological place. Bel-agisti hobbled back chattering to her women. The red man's face relaxed, and the glimmer of a smile eased the angry brows behind him. "But I tell you I hate you," he said stubbornly, "and shall I eat with you?"

"Yes, old man, certainly. Charmed, I'm sure. Have some tea," replied Blantyre, with a gleam in his blue eyes. "Too hot to talk about hating."

Na-quape turned and beckoned. The crescent of fighting men rolled forward, leaving each his

short gun glinting in the long grass. Closely folded blankets were laid aside, and the deputy saw lean bodies, and caught the play of tireless sinews that slipped smoothly beneath the copper-coloured skin. They were men, these savages, he thought. Then the women came with their skinning knives and made the feast ready, and, when Na-quape had eaten, he spoke; but, this time, as to a man whose bread he had broken.

As Blantyre listened, he became slowly aware that he was reading one of the mysteries of the world, for, far back as nations go, no one of them but can trace its parentage to some ancient stock, while this wild man, who talked so proudly, seemed to be sprung, indeed, from the wild land he trod. There was a fibre in the blue-eyed Englishman that answered to this; and as he listened he learned, till out of his learning began to grow that respect shared by all who knew the red man as he was before he became what his white brother made him. Blantyre had heard orators, but he had never before recognized the truth as he got it from Na-quape. The chief held out the pipe again: "It is the pipe of Peguis, the Chief

of Chiefs," he said simply, and this time it did not seem so dirty to Blantyre.

Then Na-quape rose and held out his hand in amity. "You say it is too hot for hate, and perhaps you are right. The winter is coming, and then it will be too cold for hate. I cannot eat my words, and I will not take treaty. But if you come again, I will be here on this day of the next year, and then we shall talk treaty."

Blantyre felt a hard palm close over his own, but something rose in his throat, and he could not speak. Na-quape mounted his horse and moved majestically into the west; behind him the fighting men, and behind them trailed the women. As they came they went, austere and magnificent. He turned to the Sergeant, who, with his three privates, was staring after the little troop. "'Tention!" he rapped out. "Salute!"

THE YOUNGER SON

"Thy father's name, thy father's place,
With all I have are thine,
And always would I see thy face
Thou eldest son of mine.

For thee, oh son of later birth,
The distant countries lie,
Wherein a man shall prove his worth
Ere he come home to die."

Then sat him down the first-born son,
Upheld his father's hand,
And marked the seasons one by one
Enfold the quiet land.

Tho' sharp the cup he turned to fill
It drew not any cry,
From one who halted on the hill,
But came not home to die.

THE YOUNGER SON

I saw him first when I glanced down through the fanlight of the cooks' galley—a long, thin, hollow face, high forehead, and plaintive but uncomplaining eyes. He walked wraith-like through the steam, giving me a curious impression of detachment from arms and body. These moved silently and invisibly in the vapours that rose from a regiment of simmering pots and cauldrons—and above them apparently floated the face. Something drew his gaze to mine and held it there; and instantly I became aware that we were conversing—not audibly, but with a direct confident exchange that needed no language to express it. He began it after a long, thoughtful stare, during which his invisible hands were mechanically stirring something savoury, but submerged. "You quite understand, don't you? I can see that you do. I've no business to be here. It would be ridiculous, if it were not——"

The thread broke off with a sudden projection of himself, an utter casting of his whole individuality on my intuition.

Thank God!—I did understand, and flashed the assurance back to him. He caught it deftly, moved a little to let another cook crowd past between himself and the dish-rack, then heliographed me again:—"Of course, it's just as you like, but if you are on deck to-night I would like to speak. One doesn't get the chance very often, and I've got to get on with this rotten show now."

I took a strong liking to him for that—this delicate head poised in a well-bred aloofness, yet not a whit divorced from the pans and kettles beneath: so I moved away contentedly, lest anything lingering and unsolicited should imperil this entente, this subtle bridging of the gulf between the cooks' galley and the promenade deck.

For the rest of the afternoon we ploughed gloriously up Lake Superior, till the shores melted into indistinction on either side, and night dropped over the ship. There is little twilight in Canada. Day ends rather with an abrupt transition, a quick

encounter of light and darkness, succeeded by an opaque luminosity in which one can see for long distances, and in which light itself seems to be conquered but not altogether banished. And it was in this chiaroscuro that his figure came silently across the deserted deck, and dropped into a chair beside me.

There fell a long silence, in which he mechanically picked a cigarette from my proffered case, and tapped it gently on the rail. He seemed to have drifted across my horizon, and now to have swerved and headed toward me, till he loomed up sharply and directly ahead. And I knew that there was that in myself which waited for him with anticipatory recognition.

It struck me, first of all, that he talked without cynicism or bitterness. The long, smooth jet of grey smoke slipping from his lips was no smoother than his even speech. It was not till the cabin-door swung open, and a glare of light momentarily flooded the deck, that I saw his face clearly, redeemed from the greasy vapours of the galley. Then, everything was very plain. The hollow cheek, doubly sunken beneath the cheek bone,

the supernormal brightness of the slightly protruding eyes, the prominence of neck sinews, and the lean caverns in the neck itself—all told but one story. "It's a jolly old place," he was saying, "particularly the gardens. And when I was a youngster we used to shoot rabbits with a rook rifle from the billiard-room window. The only trouble was the moles under the lawn—one never knew where the little beggars were going to push up. And then I got my ferrets. I say! what school are you?"

"Loretto—but I'm a Canadian."

"Oh! I thought you were English. I'm Uppingham—we used to play you at cricket." He wandered back to his father's place in Kent. "My brother's in the Service. That was a pretty stiff pull, so I couldn't go up to Oxford. Next year, one of my sisters was presented, and then the other one, and the Governor never quite caught up. You see, he only has fifteen hundred a year. I would have been perfectly satisfied to stay at home, because I wasn't very fit, but the Governor used to send Dick a hundred a quarter, and so——"

The delicate soul of him baulked at the rest of it. I passed over my cigarettes, and presently the thin voice trailed on, beneath the booming plunge of the black marble wave that fell away under our vessel's crowding cut-water:—"He was really awfully decent. He gave me forty pounds and a ripping camera, and they all came up to town to see me off. We dined at the old Cri., and then went to the Palace to see Dan Leno."

"How long have you been in Canada?" I put it as gently as I could, but with inward choking and a rising gorge.

"About eighteen months. I got a warehouse job in Montreal, but the work was too heavy. There was a lot of lifting, and my wind gave out. I had the same trouble at Uppingham. Could never do more than the hundred, or a quarter at most. I got seedy at Montreal. My lung played out, and the doctor told me to stay out of doors."

"And this—this—what you are doing now?"

He laughed—and at the sound of it, the tears crept into my eyes. A mirthless ghost of a laugh

it was, yet, curiously, just such as one might expect from the face, that looked so hollow and evanescent when wiped clean of the grease of the galley. The warehouse and the dish-rack had in nowise robbed it of the distinguishable stamp of centuries of birth and breeding. It stared at me, furthermore, as if inwardly illuminated by the light of a lamp that flickered the higher ere it expired in darkness: and it was this transient physical quality, no less than his unembittered spirit, that held me.

"And then I shipped as deck-hand; but that was a bit too thick, and the cook took me on: so there you are. I say! I haven't talked to anyone like this since I left home—do you mind?"

It was too much! "For God's sake, talk!" I blurted, "Talk all night, if you will. I'm just beginning to see things. Do you hear often?"

"Not very. I'd like to hear every month, but, of course, I can see it all. Things don't change much there, you know. Dick's brevetted, and one of my sisters was married last month. They sent me the clipping. I thought of trying to get

over last Christmas, but I know a chap who did that. He dropped in on his people unexpectedly, but it didn't come off very well. You see, they didn't expect him, and it rather upset their arrangements. He was a good deal cut up about it, and came back at once."

I was full of sudden and savage promptings. "Do they know about your lung?" I asked, brutally.

But Deane did not answer. Instead, he raised a long, attenuated hand, and pointed over the starboard quarter. The great red globe of the moon was just swinging into sight up and out of the silver rimmed horizon. We watched silently, staring along the brilliant pathway of gently heaving swells that stretched eastward from our milky wake. Save for the steady pulse of the engines, and the perceptible lift of our throbbing screw, we were utterly alone. Four thousand miles on the other side of the moon, was that England that had spewed forth her younger son. That was in his mind too—it was legible in the wistful eyes. But it was his—their affair. I felt helpless to wage war on a condition

and ancient precepts. I was robbed of my arms by Deane's impersonality—a fine, delicate thing that said very clearly that though he was glad to sit and talk about it, this was, after all, a matter that concerned only his people and himself.

I could quite distinctly hear him breathing, with quick, irregular, little indrawings between parted lips. He sat soundless and motionless, apparently indifferent to the cold air which, even in mid-summer, overlies the icy depths of this inland ocean. And then I grasped at that which must have lain behind all his magnificent nerve and poise. "Look here! you can't stay here—you simply can't. Let me get you out of it."

"Do you think it's worth while—now," he added, staring at me with curious eyes, full of premonitory understanding.

This palpable comprehension made it hard to answer. It was like a derelict, with decks awash, questioning the value of its own rescue by a well-found and friendly ship. No man could look at Deane and give him more than a year to live; but I revolted at the thought of that year in a

cook's galley. "Can you draw?" I hazarded, thinking of his long, thin, fingers.

"A little," he deprecated, "but not well enough to be of use to anyone."

"I have a friend—an architect," I lied brazenly and joyfully, "who wants an office man—wants him at once. Will you try it?"

He walked over to the rail and began to cough—horribly; his whole frame shook with it. Then he came back, a little unsteadily, and stood looking down at me with just that attitude of polite detachment that the *Sphere* and the *London News* bestow upon their well-bred Englishmen—an attitude unapproached by any but the pure Saxon. "Do you mean that—really?"

"My dear chap, I mean it so much that if you will meet me in Toronto this day week, the whole affair will be settled in five minutes."

I shall never be able to quite describe his face at that moment. There was relief in it—enormous, yet potently restrained. I suppose the unexpected contact with my own certitude stiffened him, for he straightened up, and his narrow shoulders went back squarely. Behind this was something both

memorial and prophetic. I was in touch with his uncomplaining soul, but there were depths in it which he guarded jealously. It was only a part of him that I could help. My hand closed over his own, and I tried to infuse into my grasp what I could of strength and encouragement. Words were futile; but I shall always remember the feel of his thin, cold grip. Then, as quietly as he came, he slipped off to some remote shelf, that was called a bed, in the bowels of the ship.

I had no difficulty in converting Cooper, and in a week's time installed Deane in front of a drawing board, in the office of that most successful architect. Cooper listened very sympathetically. "A little more tracing paper destroyed will not be noticed," that was the way he met my thanks. He knew, and smiled when I prophesied progress for Deane, because he knew that I knew also; but we formed a deceptive alliance, and between us bolstered Deane into a semblance of hope. Then I suggested that he write to his father, and tell him that things were looking up.

He did write, though what he said I do not

know; but shortly after I got a letter from England:—

"The Priory,
"Maidstone, Kent.

"My Dear Sir,—I have just heard from my son of your recent kindness to him, and write to thank you for your interest in one who was a total stranger. It is indeed good of you to take so much trouble on his behalf. Harry writes that since the change he thinks he is better. I am sure that although he is not extremely robust, the slight pulmonary trouble he at one time experienced will ultimately be entirely cured by the bracing climate of Canada. I trust that his progress in his new position will justify what you have been kind enough to do for him.

"I am, My dear Sir,
"Yours very truly,
"Joseph Deane."

I was instantly able to visualize Joseph Deane—an immaculately circumscribed man, the autocrat of the Priory, divided between a match for his remaining unappropriated daughter and a life of

cold self-sacrifice for Harry in the Guards. As to Mrs Deane, she appeared one of those negatively necessary persons who round out an over-modulated existence with "As you think best, dear." I knew enough of England to imagine the Priory, its grey stone boundaries, the velvet smooth lawn, the peach trees on the south side of the old brick wall, the (to a Colonial) enervating perfection of it all, the suggestion that for a thousand years people had been sitting up at night to produce just such orderly exclusiveness. And then I came up hard against young Deane, with his gentle idealism and silent fortitude, and began to understand the enormous strength of race and blood and breeding, and how it was that even bitter memories and poignant tradition still compelled him to reverence that which had cast him out.

In the next few months, he made quantities of drawings and tracings—faithful, pathetic things, but absolutely unusable to a perfectionist like Cooper. I used to drop in and see his long face, with its two hectic spots, bent over the board. I got closer to him than I expected. He seemed to be in a sort of breathless calm, that heralded what

he must have known was coming very swiftly. It was about that time, shortly before the end, that he showed me Dick's photograph. Dick was the only one he said much about, and he spoke with a curious mixture of affection and family pride, differentiating himself absolutely. He had letters from Dick—big, sprawling things—telling him to buck up and make his blooming fortune.

Soon after this came the breakdown, and I moved him from his lodgings to my own house; and it was one night, when I had eased him through a prolonged fit of coughing, that I begged him to write home and put the thing exactly as it stood. He fought it off for days with gentle doggedness. Without question he had made up his mind to see it through alone, so far as they were concerned. Again I felt the existence of that lonely gulf in which his spirit seemed poised for flight; but I fumbled and implored, till he yielded.

What was in the letter I never knew, but he leaned more on me than before, as if, almost, by writing, he had dropped below some standard of his family code. The intervals between his spasms

became shorter. He filled them with weak conversations of England and the English, snatches of school days, heartbreaking and pointless ramblings of a life to which he was no part, but only a self-admitted encumbrance. He reminded me, more than anything, of the outcast of the pack—outcast through feebleness, but following alone, blindly and worshipping.

Imperative business called me away for a week, and he died the day before I returned. My manservant told me that a letter arrived from England in my absence, and that Deane looked at it for an hour before opening it. Then, when he had read it, he put it under his pillow, and turned his face to the wall. I found it there, and, for an hour, pondered with the envelope in my hand. But I could only conclude that Deane was right. What lay between those two was none of my affair. I had had a glimpse of coldness and cruelty, and something more than a glimpse of pride and courage. I began to see that the very quality which carves families to pieces may weld a nation together with bands of steel. But I wondered, and have often wondered since, whether the Saxon

repression of the evidence of personal feeling finds its vent in waves of national emotion.

Deane died of consumption, but, long before, his soul had starved to death, lacking its natural outlet. His vitality was pre-exhausted through self-repression.

After vainly imagining what effect it would have at the Priory, I wrote to Joseph Deane. There was not much to say. The dead boy had left a trust with me, and I did my best to live up to it. I said nothing of his hunger for his own kin: it would have flouted the valiant memory that will always live.

The answer came very promptly by the first return mail:—

"The Priory,
"Maidstone, Kent.

"My Dear Sir,—Your letter was a great shock to us all, as we did not realize that Harry was so dangerously ill. I had, in fact, believed that the bracing air of Canada would materially benefit him. His last communication of some six weeks ago did not prepare us for this event. Both Mrs Deane and myself feel that, at the present moment,

we cannot do more than thank you for your continued kindness to our son.

"Believe me, My dear Sir,

"Yours very sincerely,

"JOSEPH DEANE.

"*N.B.*—Kindly return Harry's camera.

"J. D."

THE DEATH SONG OF CHILIQUI

Gone are the old time tribes that peopled a continent over,
Gone as the flying clouds enshadowed the prairie grass,
And, threading the forest maze, now never a brown faced rover,
Follows the deep worn trail where the feet of the white men pass.

Still through the silent aisles the ghost of the red man wanders
Slipping from tree to tree with a viewless mocassined tread ;
Still, at the change of the year, the autumnal foliage squanders
Over his long lost grave the rain of its aureate dead.

Rising like smoke from a fire and ascending like mist from a river,
Plaintive as echoes that drift from a far away cataract's call,
Thus has he fled from the haunts that shall know him no longer for ever,
And sheer from his trampled teepee up-shoulders the factory's wall.

THE DEATH SONG OF CHILIQUI

It is written in the tales of the tribes, how, when Kee-cow-ray starved to death in the year of the big hunger, Chiliqui cared for his mother till she died of a broken heart with a smile on her face. It is also told how he appeared among the Ojibways on Cut Lake, and then wandered over to the Bloodveins with the news of the storm that swamped eight and thirty hunters' canoes on a single night, and left the Ojibway women mourning. That was the word he brought to old Peguis, chief of chiefs on Lake Winnipeg; and then, with the strange restlessness that followed him to the grave, he journeyed west past the grass covered town site of Brandon, hunting buffalo with Sioux and Blackfeet alike, getting older and wiser and stronger all the time. And at Edmonton the call of the bush country became very loud indeed, so with two Assiniboine wives he migrated to Lesser Slave

Lake and thence to the Rockies by way of the Peace River. Most of this can now be covered very comfortably in three days; but Chiliqui had no reason to hurry, and it took him a matter of some thirty years.

Now it fell on a day when he was hunting wild goats on the flanks of the Rockies, that his wives and horses were swept a thousand feet into a valley with a rock slide started by the roar of his own rifle. There was nothing left of his camp but a gash, sheared clean, through the green ledge on which it had rested; and he sat day after day, chin in hand, staring down hill, till, on the third day, two Stony Indians spied the grim and motionless figure and stayed to comfort him.

There was understanding in the comfort. They cooked and laid food before him, speaking not at all, and at night threw a blanket over his shoulders, but touched him not; till on the fourth day the mourning of Chiliqui ended, and he put out his hand to eat.

He was now fifty years old, very silent and very wise; but with that inward voice still urging

him on, he slipped away from the Stonies, setting face to the distant and magnetic north, till, one day peering down into a soft bowl of the hills, he saw that which whispered that this was the appointed place.

A hundred feet beneath was a ring of teepees, and, clustered on the grass sward, a circle of fighting men, painted, feather-decked and brass ringed. In the midst of the warriors stood a medicine man—old, parched and wrinkled; and the drone of his words drifted up to Chiliqui as he stared through a screen of bush.

"The Manitou of the Beavers has answered, and I heard him. He is sad that our Chief is dead, but he had need of him in far hunting grounds. And since there is no man here who is wise enough and strong enough to lead us, the Manitou has said this:—'You will prepare a teepee, new and very large. In it you will place skins and robes, also new and perfect, and put food there and all that a Chief should have. Then the tribe shall go away for one night only, leaving all in readiness. No man shall loiter to listen or spy out, for the Manitou will see him and he

will die. And the next day you will return and, lifting the door of the teepee, you will see your Chief.' I have spoken."

There was silence for a moment, then, with a rumble of deep voices, the fighting men rose in a wave of colour. Chiliqui lay motionless, counting the tribe as the warriors called their families and gave their orders. The young men raised the new teepee, and from many a fireside came deerskins, and copper kettles and gaudy blankets from the Peace River Post, and long shining buffalo knives—all that a Chief might need. And when it was done and the door thrown back, the tribe melted silently into the woods.

Chiliqui held his breath till it was all over, and descended at sundown swathed in shadows. Burning his own travel stained attire, he ate and robed himself anew. Then in the centre of the new teepee he sat and waited.

At daybreak the woods were full of whispers and awe. The Beavers were brave, but who brave enough to face the emissary of the Manitou; till the old medicine man came trembling and looked in. He saw one who seemed indeed a

Chief. A face seamed with the wisdom of many travels; eyes sombre and full of mysterious things; a nose hooked like the eagle's; hair long and black, shot with grey threads; a demeanour austere and wise, but benignant.

"Who are you?" said the medicine man, quivering at this fulfilment.

"The Manitou sent me and I came. What need have you of more?" said Chiliqui, sternly.

A hundred hidden Beavers heard, and saw the medicine man bow before him. A murmur ran through the underbrush, and in twos and threes came the tribe, and, seeing Chiliqui, marvelled, and were content.

Now of the wise rule of the heaven-sent leader, and the new strength of the tribe, and his last marriage to Chon-clar, Rainy Weather, is it not told daily in the hunting camps on the plains of Ponce-coupé? But of the issue of that marriage, namely, Cha-koos, the Comet, and D'Zintoo, the Rat, it is well to speak

Cha-koos was twenty and D'Zintoo was nineteen when Mee-nin, the Blueberry, came between them. She was tall and slight, with big black eyes that

had roved lightly over all the young hunters till they settled on Cha-koos with love in their glance. Chiliqui knew this, and his soul was glad in it, because Cha-koos was the pride of his age, and Mee-nin was worthy of his eldest son. But in this he reckoned without the younger, for D'Zintoo also worshipped her, and laid at her mother's door the best of his hunting, and coloured handkerchiefs and silver rings, and all that could charm the heart of a most marriageable girl.

To this she was very blind. So it fell on a day that Cha-koos took her to his teepee, and Chiliqui gave his last great feast, while D'Zintoo stalked up and down outside the merrymakers, with murder in his heart.

"Where is my son?" said Chiliqui, in the plenitude of his content.

"He walks outside like the bear at night," giggled the young girls. "Shall we bring him in?"

Chiliqui nodded; and presently D'Zintoo appeared, like a thunder cloud hurried along by a burst of sunny weather.

"Will my son eat?" said Chiliqui, looking at him hard.

D'Zintoo returned the stare, then his eyes wandered to Cha-koos sitting with his arm around his bride. Something rose in his throat, and, in a flash, a buffalo knife whipped out and he plunged across the teepee. Cha-koos sprang up, but D'Zintoo never reached him. Quicker than his fury were the hand and eye of Chiliqui. He felt himself hurled violently back, the knife ripped from his grip, and saw his father standing over him.

In the silence that followed Chiliqui spoke one word, but, as he spoke, held back the teepee door, pointing to the forest. "Go," he said, grimly; and D'Zintoo, the Rat, meeting the gaze that was bent on him, slunk like a rat into the woods.

Things went very well then. Mee-nin blossomed like a flower in the strong brown arms of her husband, and Chiliqui's cup was full when a man-child was born to them within the year. But there came a day when a hunter from Ponce-coupé told that he had seen a bear trap, that

he knew had been set by none other than D'Zintoo. At this Chiliqui laughed, but Mee-nin looked grave and stayed the closer to Cha-koos.

Springtime sat gently on the hills, when there moved in the breast of Chiliqui that which told him that his day was near at hand. He was old and worn with many labours and much sorrow. Also he was getting blind. So, taking his drum and climbing painfully to that same ledge from which he had descended twenty years before, he sat in the sunshine, singing weakly to himself. And as he sat, D'Zintoo stalked out of the woods and lifted the door of the teepee of Cha-koos.

His brother glanced up from the shadow, and met the murderous eye. There was no need for words. So he kissed Mee-nin and his son very tenderly. "I go to speak to D'Zintoo. Wait till I come."

At the foot of the ledge where Chiliqui sat, was a smooth spot of velvet turf, and there the brothers met, stripped to the waist, their brown skins oiled and glistening, their moccasined feet resting lightly on the green sward. There

was no sound except their own deep breathing, and overhead the drone of the departing Chieftain.

Cha-koos took off his neck-cloth and swung one end of it to his brother. D'Zintoo crouched and gripped it. In the right hand of each was a buffalo knife, ten inches of blade exceeding sharp and heavy, embedded in a massive bone handle.

"Now," said D'Zintoo, thickly.

The blades clashed, pressing each against the other. There was no time to draw back and stab, for the secret of fighting with buffalo knives is first to maim and then to kill. Cha-koos leaned back, feinted, and slashed like lightning at the sinews of his brother's wrist, but D'Zintoo's arm fell away like water, and Cha-koos was hard set to save himself. The neck-cloth ran taut between them. It meant that only one hand was in action, but it spelled out the interchange of every savage impulse. Not for an instant did the beady eyes desert the defiant gaze that met them. Cross and parry, thrust and counter, the blades flickered, darting, twisting, and glancing, but always return-

ing to that silent deadly pressure.

The word ran through the camp. The fighters were rimmed with a watchful ring of voiceless Beavers—a rim that broke and scattered, and closed and formed again with the quick panting leaps of the brothers. And into the ring ran Mee-nin with her son in her arms. "Cha-koos!" she wailed, "Cha-koos!"

Her husband heard it, and for a fraction of a second his eyes wavered. D'Zintoo heard it, and a flash of triumph lit his face, for in that fraction he reached the sinews in the elbow of his brother. The arm of Cha-koos dropped and straightened. His fingers loosened on the handle. But, as they loosened, he let slip the neck-cloth and with his left hand caught the great knife. Then, as his whole breast opened and spurted red beneath the slashing stroke of D'Zintoo, he thrust outward and upward, burying his own blade to the hilt. The last thing he heard on earth was the choking cough of his brother as they fell together.

High and shrill rose the cry of Mee-nin. Flinging herself beside Cha-koos, she took his head to

her breast, babbling unutterable things. His frame shuddered in her embrace and lay limp, a bright flood streaming from his gaping chest. She stared at him fixedly. Then her hand stole out to where the knife of D'Zintoo lay loosely in slackened fingers. Springing erect, she stood a moment facing the silent ring of Beavers, and with one swift motion tore open her robe and bared the smooth bronze of her full bosom. Upward flashed the huge blade, scattering a dreadful rain of blood in its ascent, ere it struck downward to a new sheath. "Watch and see a Beaver woman die." She called it loudly, defiantly. Then the cold steel sank to her heart, and she dropped like a stricken deer across the body of Cha-koos.

Chiliqui leaned over and peered down from his high ledge. He could see the ring of men, and could dimly make out something inside the ring. The fight was grimly silent; and not till Mee-nin wailed "Cha-koos," did he break the deep reflection of his spirit. But that name was a name he loved, and at the sound of it he called faintly, and no man looked or heard.

Now that death had come so very swiftly, the circle of warriors stared at each other and then up where Chiliqui sat helpless and wondering. It would take a strong one to tell Chiliqui—and of them all, who was brave enough; till out of the silence rose the ancient medicine man. "I am going the way that Chiliqui goes," he said, steadily, "and it may be we shall journey together.

They watched him climb. They saw his grey head stoop to that other grey head in a communion of grief and age. They noted the drooping figure reel under the last blow that earth could inflict on that proud unyielding front. Then the medicine man moved slowly away and drew his robe over his face.

The sun stooped to the long magnificent flanks of the hills. There came over the vast expanse of earth and sky the ineffable stillness that pervades the closing of day in silent places. And down from the ledge drifted the death song of Chiliqui, broken with the rumble of his drum.

I am Chiliqui, the son of Kee-cow-ray and Warchoola.
The Ojibways know me, and I have spoken with Peguis, Chief of Chiefs.
The Bloodveins remember me, for I have travelled the warpath with the Sioux.
I have killed with the Blackfeet, and my sons ride with their hunters, when the buffalo cover the plains like black moss, and the noise of their running is like Baim-wawa, the thunder.
I journeyed west till I came again to the bush country, and the Manitou of the Beavers knew me and made ready for me.
There I sought a home and wives; there I rested and slept.
I made the tribe strong and wise, finding honour and peace in the hills.
Now that my sons are dead, I am very weary.
My eyes are like thick glass; my arms are withered away; and I hear only the whisper of men speaking together.
I am tired of remembering many things, and the years of my journeying are ended.
I will go now, and when you come to the far hunting grounds you will find me—Chiliqui.

The weak old voice dwindled as he chanted. Life was visibly departing from his weather beaten frame and valiant spirit. Then with one ultimate flash he smote the drum. Its echoes boomed out across the voiceless camp, lifting till they were lost in the austerity of the tilted peaks beyond. And when the echoes slept, Chiliqui slept with them.

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